

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 01647478 5









97







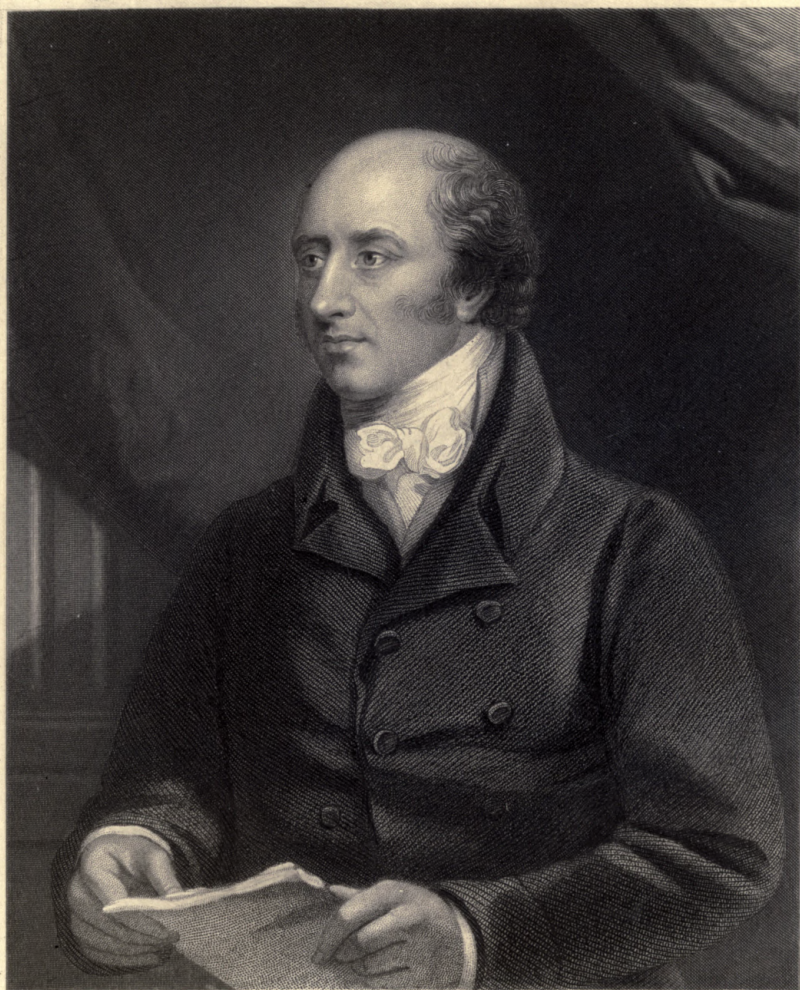


W. Hall.

*H. Grattan*

RIGHT HON<sup>BLE</sup> HENRY GRATTAN.

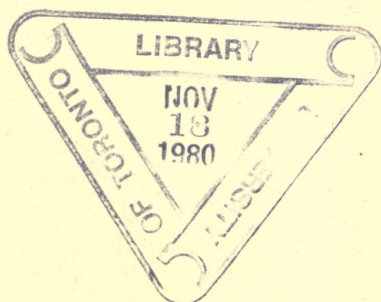




W. Hall.

*Geo Canning*

GEORGE CANNING



DA

916

W54

0.5





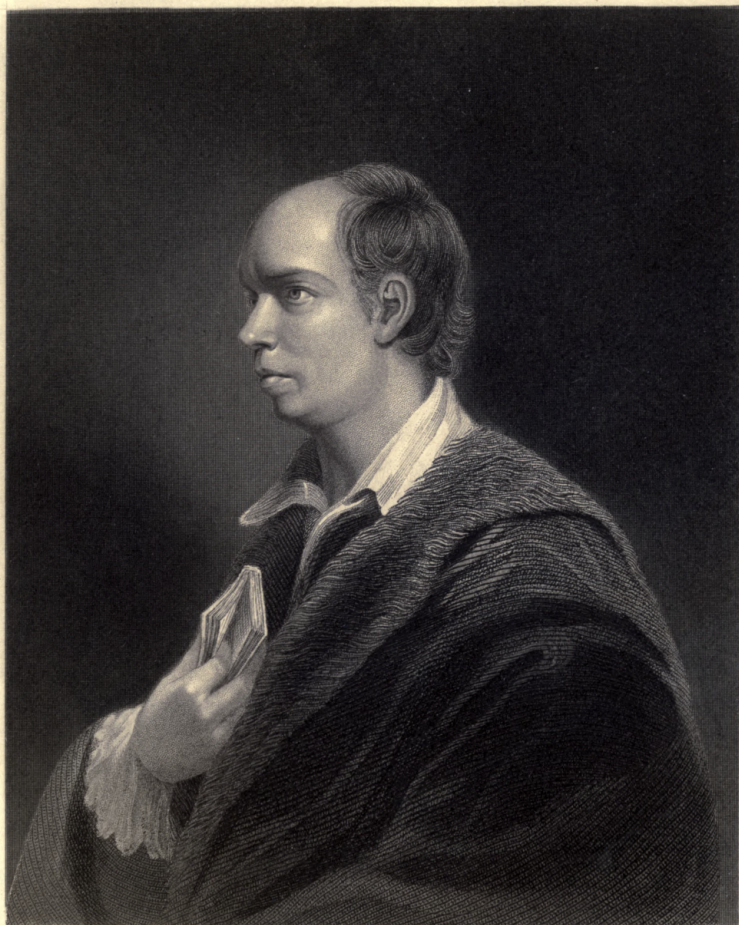




J. Le Conte

*John Curran*

RIGHT HON<sup>BLE</sup> JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN.



W. Hall

*Oliver Goldsmith*

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.









Enclav

THE  
IRISH NATION.

MODERN.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

Reign of Anne—Peace in Ireland—Factions in England—Policy of the Penal Laws—  
George I.—George II.—Cause of the increase of Roman Catholics.

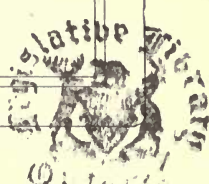
FROM the reign of King William may be dated the dim and cloudy beginning of a period of comparative calm—a calm, however, devoid of the sunshine of prosperity. The reign of Anne was much like the torpid collapse after a long and fearful struggle; the combative animosity of the Celt for a lethargic interval subsided into unnatural repose; and the nation lay still, till young blood and a new race, forgetful, or ignorant, of the horrors of perpetual slaughter, should arise, or when the restless temper of the aggressor, with the sense of ancient wrong, might recover breath, and violence and rapine should be marshalled anew to the work of devastation.

Two great parties had long divided the nation—separated from each other by the ineradicable line of religious creeds—by hereditary animosities—by binding oaths, pledging them to opposition—and by the galling recollection of mutual and inextinguishable wrongs. The one backed by the power then in the ascendant over the Councils, and throughout the continent of Europe, the other virtually as irresistible in the British mind and people. That these should lie down in contented peace together, or consent to common interests, was little to be hoped. It was felt, under the pressure of experience, that for the moulding of any constitution which should include Ireland, the voice of faction was to be stamped down. We do not here propose to justify the course adopted for this most necessary but arduous and dangerous end, carried, as we believe it to have been, as far beyond its need, as beyond humanity.

But it was the period of a momentous crisis; the nation could no longer afford to halt between two contending factions—it was necessary to obey Rome or England, with a dim alternative for France. The question was for a moment in abeyance; it was settled by the penal laws. This harsh policy was not adopted for the end since so generally fancied by the patriot of later times, of securing an oppo-

III.

A



site ascendancy; it was the total suppression of one of the adverse factions, to leave free and unresisted action to the other, more connected with the legislative and executive authorities. Such was the design, and such, though slowly and with many interferences, was the actual development of a regular civil policy in the country. It was an expedient too precipitately pursued, carried far beyond the necessity, and maintained too long, and then relaxed as imprudently as it was adopted; for, whatever the advantage, it has entailed woe on Ireland, and trouble (not yet past) on both countries. The penal laws commenced with the first Parliament of William; they were completed by successive additions in the next reign. They must necessarily hereafter occupy much of our attention; we must dismiss them for the present with one important observation. Whatever may be the judgment respecting the policy or justice of these severe measures, whether the triumph of a class or the self-preservation of a government—(for religion was in no way a motive)—there was not the violation of compact or treaty so repeatedly pretended by pamphleteers and mob orators. There was no confirmation of the one binding article of the proposed treaty of Limerick on which the imputation was charged. The military articles were necessarily confirmed between the officers on the spot preliminary to the operation of surrender, which implied no more. The civil conditions were for the king's discretion; by him these were afterwards confirmed; but the constitutional article, which gave the more general validity claimed for the whole, was, in accordance with its terms, referred to Parliament and rejected. We may at a future stage of our narrative resume this question.

But we must observe that historians have looked with partial and exclusive interest on either side. This may, it is true, be ascribed very much to the fact that Irish history has taken its tone from the length and animosity of an unceasing party conflict, in which the keenest passions have been engaged. The restless conflict of attack and retort—of expedient or unavoidable denial—have of necessity brought into unceasing play the contest of advocacy, of accusation, defence, and crimination. And from these the historian has, by a moral and political necessity, taken his colour and tone. It is most easy for the pleader of either party to find matter for accusation, and no less for defence. Such a condition as that of Ireland, during the 17th and 18th centuries, originated as the result of causes which scarcely admitted of any other. It was a contest between barbarism and imperfect civilization for the supremacy, for the rule of law, and for freedom from law.

On the incidents of Queen Anne's short reign of twelve years we see no reason for entering into detail. Whatever may have been the tacit operation of the events here briefly summed, they have comparatively little historical note. In a word, their result was the preservation of the connection of the British Islands by the entire suppression of the ultramontane power in Ireland during a period of great relaxation at home. A foreign pressure—Jacobinism—hovered on the coast, and France held our forces in the field. The period belongs more exclusively to English history. What may be regarded as of personal interest will fully occupy the history of the principal actors in the scenes of civil and social life.



While a long and dull repose lay over the late tempest-beaten fields and still obscure towns of the least uncultured part of Ireland, yet under all obstructions, moral, social, economical and administrative, the arts and manners of civilization began to obtain a slow and partial development. And the foundations of that English interest arose which alone protected and saved the connexion with England. England herself was carried through every trial to which a kingdom could be exposed, short of invasion or civil war. With regard to Ireland, her policy was yet kept in subjection to her own interest; a jealous regard to legislative and commercial superiority appears prominent in all her dealing. It was in effect simply a colonial policy, maintained for the dominant state—yet, notwithstanding this depressing condition, the interests chiefly important to social progress were not neglected.

The Day of Anne has been not inappropriately compared to the Augustan age. A full survey of the literature of that period would go far to confirm a sentence in which we should have little immediate concern, were it not for the communion of genius, and participation of intellectual resource and impulse, untrammelled by the policy of kings and uncontrolled by laws other than those of mind; and thus, while small tyrannies, commercial restraints, and territorial or fiscal oppressions, materially tended to depress the spirit and retard the advance of the country, an intelligent sense was in its dawn, and a spirit was rising, to be in future days matured into the bright intellectual noonday which has, in our own time, raised Ireland's university to a level with Cambridge, and placed Lloyd, Hamilton and Macullagh, with Herschell, Adams and Leverier, and among the worthy successors of Newton. The rich cultivation of letters could not fail to spread light across the channel, and generally, rude as was the level of the Irish community then, it is enough that it could touch on the eminences of individual minds for the diffusion of moral culture, and the first awakening of the national intellect. The next generation, immediately to appear on our pages, renders any farther addition to these comments needless. The period of William, Anne, and the first George, opens an age as illustrious for its men, as it was memorable for its great events; and among the former, Ireland is represented by no inferior names.

We will not in this place abuse our reader's patience by enlarging upon events of contemporary history, which must in some measure enter into the principal memoirs of the existing period. But we take occasion to apprise him that from this, the character of our task must undergo a considerable change. The Irish biographer must accompany his heroes to every point of the compass, and be in some measure a citizen of the world. It may, in passing, be briefly observed, that, during the dull stagnation of the reign of this good queen in Ireland, the English annals are equally memorable for signal events. It is no less signalised for a long contest of intrigue and perfidy which dishonours some among the highest names.

In 1759 there was a general apprehension of a French descent upon the Irish coast. There had been for some years a Continental war, and the Government were, at this time, engaged in precautionary measures. The Duke of Bedford was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. From him the Irish Commons received a message intimating the pro-

bable expectation of an invasion of the coast for the purpose of creating a diversion of English attacks on the continent. The appeal drew forth a general spirit of loyalty; but the invasion did not occur so soon as expected. Then soon after, came a startling confirmation, in the appearance of a small expedition, containing about 6,000 troops, at Kilsoot, near Carrickfergus, on 22d February, 1760. It caused great consternation through the country, but ended in a slight assault on the town gates, which only obtained its partial success owing to the absence of all adequate provision for defence in troops or ammunition. The garrison consisted of ill-armed militia—mostly armed by themselves—their powder was soon expended in the first attack, and when the enemy's guns had forced the gates, the walls being in a dilapidated condition, the commandant found himself compelled to beat a parley, and propose terms of surrender. The terms proposed were granted, with the exception of the stores in the castle. We think it needless to dwell more minutely on the particulars of this capitulation, rendered ineffective by the event. The French commander became immediately aware of preparations being made and bands collecting, to attack his small force, and also of the proximity of three English ships, by which his retreat might be intercepted. He re-embarked in haste, and was pursued. An engagement followed, in which M. Thurot was slain, and his ships taken. The vessels so captured were, the *Belleisle* 44 guns, *La Bland* 32, and *Terpsichore* 26. The British squadron was commanded by Captain John Elliot; whose report of the affair is dated 29th Feb. 1760. The reign of George I. had so little influence on the affairs of Ireland, that we omit any allusion to it here.

On 25th October in the same year George II. died, and the long and eventful reign of his successor began.

The reigns of the two first Georges, though not without many special interests, which will appear in the lives which are to follow this summary, can hardly be said to occupy a place in the general history of Ireland.

Nearly at the same period, the question of a legislative union was first introduced in the Irish Parliament, but was for the time suppressed by popular intimidation. Before it could be further entertained with the remotest effect, forty years of political intrigue and popular ferment were destined to elapse. To some details respecting these, we shall presently have to pass.

Some general facts on the state of the country must properly precede the events of a more stirring time, when popular spirit, renewed by long repose, once more, under altered circumstances, began to uprear its crest. Though rebellion slept, and disloyalty seemed forgotten, local and occasional discontents and partial outbreaks among the lower orders, kept alive their restless nature for coming outbreaks.

We cannot better portray the state of the land, or of the spirit of the nation in the point of time here marked out, than by using the language of the Roman Catholics in their address on the King's accession in 1760.\*

\* Economy of space compels the omission of the merely formal passages of this long address.



This address is inserted to show that the Roman Catholics were at this time sensible of the lenity they had for many years experienced from the Government.

"Permit us to condole with your Majesty, and pour out our sincere sorrow for the loss we have sustained, by the death of a monarch who had always approved himself the common father of all his people; a loss the more sensible on our part, as the repose we have so long enjoyed proceeded from his royal clemency, and the mild administration of his government in this kingdom.

Ever since the accession of your Majesty's royal house to the throne of these realms, we have in a particular manner experienced the paternal interposition of your illustrious predecessors. We, most gracious sovereign, who are so unfortunately distinguished from the rest of your subjects, cannot subsist without a continuance of the royal favour and protection.

Sensible of the same hereditary compassion in your Majesty's breast, we most humbly hope for that share in the happiness of your reign, which our peculiar circumstances can admit, and we beg leave to assure your Majesty of our grateful and constant return of affection and loyalty; *a loyalty which our conduct has proved and our religion enforces*; happy might it entitle us to express a wish, that of all your Majesty's dutiful subjects of this kingdom, we alone may not be left incapable of promoting the general welfare and prosperity of it.

May the Almighty so influence and direct your Majesty's counsels, through the whole of your reign, that they may be ever productive of real happiness to all your people! And may that reign be as memorable for its duration and felicity, as for the greatness and variety of those blessings which we have already such reason to expect from it.\*

Though at the accession of Anne, and during the earlier years of the Hanover princes, a spirit of popular submission appears to have prevailed, war had smoothed its front, and the political grievances seemed mute; but yet the natural restlessness of faction was alive, and local grievances, never wanting, began to assume formidable dimensions early in the reign of George II. Factions or discontented individuals had, during Queen Anne's reign, made earnest efforts to obtain personal importance, or avenge neglect by stirring up the populace. Already the title of Patriot won its equivocal honour, and the Demagogue began to strut and spread his tail in the face of authority. Civic grievances rose at times to an alarming pitch. But in the year 59 or 60, the language of sedition and the working of conspiracy became thenceforth distinct in shape and action.—It will be necessary to particularize these comparatively slight interruptions to the general tranquillity, not only because they succeeded each other upon an increasing scale of audacity and virulence—but in the course of time grew to be the constitutional disease of the Irish nation. Both in cause and character, the earliest instance of these destructive eruptions of popular discontent was similar to the disorders of later times; though perhaps more exclusively ascribable to the spontaneous excitement of the people, goaded by real causes of discontent, and unprompted by the suggestive eloquence of the

\* Seward's Collectanea Politica.

Patriot. The grievance was loud, and though the vindication, as usual with popular reprisals, went far beyond the injury, there was a considerable amount of wrongful disregard of the local suffering inflicted upon a poor and industrious community.

Many of the estated gentlemen in Munster had, to some extent, allowed rights of common to their tenants over their waste lands, in compensation of the exorbitant rents for their small farms. Following, in course of improvement, the suggestions of personal interest, and disregarding the claims of implied compact—they proceeded to enclose their commons. It must be needless to point out the consequence to those who had been thus enabled to find pasture for their cattle, and possessed no other, within their narrow inclosures, necessarily devoted to tillage for the sustenance of their families and payment of their rents. The result was the Whiteboy insurrection, organised by a secret conspiracy bound by oath; in the mode afterward so well known in the many following outbreaks, the same in fashion, however various in pretext and immediate direction. In this, as in all subsequent like conspiracies, the disorderly proceedings, though seeming to bear some ostensible relation to the matter of complaint, extended to every criminal outrage on life and property. Fences were levelled—cattle maimed—and murders committed.

It may be just to add here, once for all, what may equally apply to other succeeding instances, that much of the reproach fell upon the Romish inhabitants of the Southern provinces in which these atrocities prevailed—and were charged unjustly to religious perversions, or priestly influences. However this element may be, on some such occasions, truly traced in the deviations of the Irish peasantry, at worst they will be found but supplementary to more influential causes—and far more powerful promptings. Whatever may have been the real inclination of the Romish Priest as the vowed subject and self-devoted bondsman of the Pope—he has been in an increasing ratio more the instrument than the prime mover of popular tendency. In later times the Demagogue has mainly usurped the privilege of dictating to popular passions to burn at his will and for his interest. One fact is to be observed in relation to such a conclusion; for some hundred years back from the period on which we are engaged—the Irish peasantry were of the Romish Church—had they been of any other, the same occasions of resentment or the same sowers of sedition would have awakened the same spirit of outrage, and led on to the same atrocities. Much of this will hereafter appear more fitly. In the Whiteboy insurrection the priests exerted themselves for the suppression of crime and the restoration of order.

The tumults of the Whiteboys were soon suppressed; but a fire was kindled in the Irish temperament, which never after was wholly quenched. The same spirit of organization for similar disorderly outbreaks became as it were naturalized among the Irish peasantry, and delivered down from the Whiteboy of that generation to the Ribbonman of the present. Bound by oaths to a regular and strict discipline of mutual support, secrecy, and subordination to leaders;—on some occasions leagued by hardships and oppressions real or imagined, on others instigated by the self-interested schemers who took to themselves the title of Patriots—they became the periodic terrors of each succeeding



generation; gaining in the course of time more formidable ascendancy over the peace of society, and at last over the legislature of the nation. It may now be simply tedious to detail the grievances of the Oakboys, bound to a week of annual labour on the roads; or the Star-boys, a few years later the predecessors of land-tenure discontents; and whether justifiable or not in their individual complaints, in each instance proceeding lawlessly to the redress of all imaginable wrongs.

In those instances of popular violence, we unjustly assign blame to the prejudices of sect or party, as in opposite quarters of the country similar disorders were alike traceable to either sect. The only true distinction lay between ignorant and civilized—rich and poor—sufferings inseparable from the general condition of a country not then emerged from barbarism, were too easily confounded with grievous wrongs, against which the course adopted for their redress was not to be vindicated. A land, then, unsuited for the residence of the wealthy and refined, or for the industrious capitalist, was of necessity exposed to the worst ills of poverty and neglect.

There never was a time in which cause of changes might not be found on every side, and sect, and party—such is the condition of humanity. But the worst of results has arisen from the mischievous advocacy, which, by its one-sided, or over-coloured recollections, converts history into a libel. The Irish peasantry, which almost deserves the splendid flatteries of its deceivers, has made great advances in the course of progress—it has gained ground *per fas et nefas*, like a sturdy infant hard to dress from kicking and contortion, but at last arrayed in the attire of common humanity. Some evils belong to this condition—but these are not wrongs—and their worst effect is the perpetual tone of wicked misrepresentation, or rash misconception which so perverts them.

---

## CHAPTER II.

George III.—Considerable Change of Popular Spirit—Constitutional Changes Sought through Government—Commercial—Legislative—Free Trade to Colonies, &c.—Octennial Bill—Appellant Jurisdiction—Dissension with Lord-Lieutenant—Six Months' Money Bill—Volunteers—1782.

A REMARKABLE change is discernible in the constitution of the popular mind, of which it might be hard to fix a precise epoch. It may be described as the attainment of a national consciousness, a sense of right in the aggregate as a people. This first step toward constitutional existence may have been the result of many causes, which are usual in the progress of nations; but chiefly it can be traced as the effect of the policy which, for a season, put an end to the division which reduced the country to a battle-field of factions. It may have been with a view to the maintenance of this policy that the Government by ecclesiastics was in some measure adopted; and that for a season the government of the country was mainly carried on by faction and by the heads of the great families—to whom it was found expedient to be committed—those who, by property, held influence and commanded votes. These,



with the Lords Justices, the Archbishops Boulter and Stones, contended for power, and maintained the order of things. The Lord-Lieutenant, who was mostly absent, little interfered with these; and as nothing was known in England of Irish affairs, matters were wholly left to their own course. From the year 1724 the parliamentary factions were quietly managed, and the government was carried on mainly by the lawyers and prelates, to whose charge it was entrusted as Lords-Justices during the absence of the Lord-Lieutenant. Of this policy an account shall be given in the lives of its chief conductors.

It was in consequence of the change of spirit noticed above, that legal rights and constitutional privileges began to be sought through authorized means, and chiefly through the means of the Legislature. There existed a community jealous of civil rights and of national independence. From the commencement of the reign of George II. these sentiments were slowly propagated until the second decade of the reign of George III. The result was far, indeed, from contributing directly to the welfare of the nation; it put an end to the divisions which had hitherto agitated the people, and so far gave the virtue of unity to their efforts which had as yet but served the policy of the English government. It is not to be disguised that during all this period in all its interests this country was ruled with an exclusive regard to England. But there was now substituted for sectarian interests and popular animosities a rational regard for common rights, sure to grow, and to be handed down with accumulating power. Such was the progressive principle of this reign.

Penal laws, the grievance still complained of by the Roman Catholics, were first discussed in very full details. On this question we have heretofore given the main facts as they occurred. We may here observe, in confirmation of the present statement of the policy of that harsh test to which the members of the Papal communion were subjected, that the ablest and most zealous of those who, on the latter occasion, pleaded for the repeal of these disabilities, admitted their necessity. We do not now offer this fact as altogether vindicating their justice or as an excuse for their cruelty. Passed at a period when the claims of Ireland were less understood, they were in themselves made doubtful by many considerations which place the question in a wholly different aspect; besides the great interest of the policy already mentioned, there can be little doubt of the foreign influence to which members of that communion had been subject; of the factious employment of that influence; and also of the danger to be apprehended from their possession of the electoral franchise. Something may indeed be allowed for the ignorance respecting Ireland; then so much greater than now, when it is almost equally apparent in the policy of the government and in the opinions of the press.

Hitherto the Roman Catholics, by the connivance of the executive and the good offices of their Protestant friends, had been allowed to retain their estates through an artifice equivalent to some of those by which, in early times, the laws of real property were evaded in favour of the church. A fictitious transfer, however, in this case, placed the estate at the mercy of the nominal possessor. This advantage was in no instance abused. It is mentioned by historians that a poor Protestant

barber held the tithes of most of the Catholic estates in the south, and restored them without accepting recompence.

At that juncture much had occurred to remove the main grounds of charge against the Roman communion. During the three previous reigns their conduct had been exemplary for loyalty and order, and the time was come when they were regarded as entitled to a qualified freedom. It was now proposed, by a motion of the Right Hon. Mr. Gardiner in the Irish Commons, to bring in a Bill restoring them to the right of property in fee simple, and to the entire freedom of worship.

In the same year (1778) a similar measure was introduced by Sir George Saville in the British House of Commons, and passed without a single opposing vote. By these measures, both of which passed into law, all the severe enactments of William and Mary affecting the tenure of property by Romanists, with other penal regulations, were entirely removed.

It may be mentioned that in the previous session (1777) the Roman Catholics were empowered to take leases for any term of years not exceeding 999, or any number of lives not exceeding five.

This important matter of grievance was now finally redressed, and Roman Catholics were set free from the pressure of all *real* grievances.

In this unqualified statement it will be understood that we express our own judgment under the formidable protest of modern liberalism. We shall, at a future stage not very distant, have occasion to vindicate an opinion important for the right understanding of the present and the past of Irish history.

We must here confine ourselves to the important distinction which marked the caution of the legislators of this critical period. While conferring personal freedom and security of possession on the Roman Catholics, they with almost entire unanimity objected to the concession of political power. The history of the past admonished from no remote record that the divided allegiance which they acknowledged, though permitted to sleep while the policy of their church allowed of peace to the country, would ever, when that policy required, be ready to listen to the trumpet of sedition.\*

The main consideration then thought necessary was to guard the power to be obtained through the Parliament; by which it was supposed the kingdom would be exposed to intrigues of the Papal See; then in full activity in every state, and not the least in Ireland.

The next event which may be regarded as giving rise to a change in the course of our history was a result of the American war. This event, which, in its first effects, was productive of distress by interrupting the export of the Irish linens to America, led also to a declaration of war from France. It was a question whether the coasts and maritime towns of Ireland were safe from the fleets of this formidable alliance. The Irish seaport towns applied for protection to government, and were informed that they must protect themselves. The resources of government were supposed to be unequal to the threatened emergency. Such was the

\* It may be fit to qualify the application of this comment by recalling the differences of the times, to which reference has been repeatedly made, and to which we must return. The interests of the Pope have changed, and are changing.

origin of the Volunteers. Ireland at the instant started into an armed nation, a people embodied and disciplined by itself. It was now felt, although the sentiment was generously suppressed, and without being accompanied with a thought of disloyalty or disaffection, that Ireland, for the first time, held her fortune in her own hands. Under this feeling the officers declined the offer of the Government to take out regular commissions under the crown.

The avowed objects of the Volunteers were "the defence of the empire and the restoration of the constitution." In their steps to the latter they were cautious to limit the national claim to a point which Ireland could not herself decide upon—this was "a grant of free trade."

The great national grievance, which, for a time, counterbalanced all that government could do, even when it administered for the good of the people, was the restriction of trade, in compliance with the commercial interests of English towns. With the colonies anything like free trading was practically prohibited. In English ports there was a jealous exclusion of all commodities which might rival their own. This narrow policy had the disadvantage of being too obviously traceable to its motives, and added to the national ill-will which many causes real and imaginary had for ages been treasuring up. And it became the more odious, that attempts made by the British Ministry in 1777 and 1778 to remove these restrictions were defeated by the jealousy of various English manufacturing towns.

It was a result of the spirited position taken by the Volunteers that in the following year (1779), these restrictions came to be earnestly discussed in the Irish Commons; and after a spirited debate, in which all the eminent men whose names adorn the records of this period delivered their opinions, it was moved that "it was not by temporary expedients, but by a free trade, that the nation could be saved from ruin." This resolution, carried by unanimous consent, enforced by a six months' bill for the supplies, and not resisted by the Secretary, was favourably met in the British Parliament. The Irish Commons, in addition, specified the following claims:—A free trade to the British colonial possessions in America and the West Indies. In answer to this the minister proposed and passed a bill which repealed the laws which prohibited the exportation of Irish woollens. A like freedom in the glass trade was also granted. The further repeal of general restrictions was refused, as demanding further consideration.

This policy will presently appear in its operation in the course of the long struggle to which it gave rise. Of this struggle the law of Poynings was a main source; by this project any Bill, originating with the Irish Parliament, was to be certified to the Privy Council, and returned before it could be allowed to pass. The Lords were also deprived of the appellate jurisdiction by a declaratory act in the 5th year of George I. These, with many occasional causes of contention, maintained an irritation which grew louder as the parliamentary factions gained strength and ascendancy in the country.

This question may be traced back to its rise in 1698, when a pamphlet, entitled "The Case of Ireland, being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England, stated." In this Molyneux examined minutely



the question how far Ireland was to be considered as conquered by the Normans, by Henry II., or at any time after, tracing its subjection to treaties and voluntary transfers, and finally to the merging of the crown into that of England on the accession of King John.

The Volunteers having now entitled themselves to the public gratitude, and won, as it were, a constitutional sanction by the consent of the authorities, soon began to avail themselves of vantage, and to give a loud echo to every popular grievance. At Dungannon a meeting of the representatives of 143 corps of volunteers of Ulster was held on 15th February, 1782. At this meeting they passed several resolutions, first affirming their right as citizens not to be lost in their character as soldiers. They entered upon the whole catalogue of grievances heretofore discussed by the Commons and public. They resolved—"the claim of any body of men other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind the kingdom is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance." They next voted the claim of the Privy Council under the law of Poynning to be a grievance. Thirdly, they resolved, "That the ports of this country are by right open to all foreign countries not at war with the king, and that any burden thereupon, or obstruction thereto, save only by the Parliament of Ireland, is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance."

In similar terms they denounced a Mutiny Bill unlimited in duration, and insisted on the independence of the judges as essential to the impartial administration of justice in Ireland. Finally, they pledged their unalterable determination, as citizens and men of honour, to persevere in seeking redress in these grievances.

One further resolution we may here add, as it may serve to attest the freedom from party spirit of this illustrious body of men—"That we hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves; resolved, therefore, as men, as Irishmen, as Christians, and as Protestants, that we rejoice at the relaxation of the Penal Laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of Ireland." This last expression of sentiment, abstractedly undeniably just, was especially so at the time when the Roman Catholics had been for a season quiet and unexcited, and earnest in their profession of loyalty. And it must be here remarked, for it is one of the lessons of Irish history, that it is not the peculiar tendency of the members of this foreign church that renders them less amenable to civil order, for such is not precisely the fact. They are subject to two disturbing elements—the foreign jurisdiction enforced by spiritual sanctions; and—from the condition of largely belonging to the lower class in Ireland which exposes them more especially to the arts of the street orator, who trades in popular ignorance or party discontents. As a general fact, it may be seen that the educated class of the Roman Catholics, so far as they are under no special influence, are uniformly governed by peaceable feeling and respect for the law of the land.\*

\* We do not in the above observation assume to embrace all the conditions of the larger question, on which we have so far partially touched. A new state of

Such was the voice which then gave for the first time an utterance to the wrongs of the country, more unanimous and impressive than was ever heard from its wrangling legislature. From thenceforth the patriotic minority in the Commons obtained authority and sanction, and were felt to be entitled to that attention from the English Legislature which no conviction from reasoning or proof of fact could effect. We should be slow to sanction, under any common juncture of grievances, a similar mode of seeking redress. The common error will be found implied in the first resolution. But the combination of circumstance was solitary. It was no case of doubtful question or party division. The points to be decided were affirmed by unanimous assent and the reason of all time. The volunteers were guided by men of honour, sobriety of intellect, and constitutional knowledge. They were arrayed by authority for a high end; they used the occasion for one equally noble—one which only sought the ends of justice by strictly legal means.

The spirit thus embodied in these resolutions was universally diffused throughout the country, and found its echo in many meetings. We proceed to sum its results. The language of reason and justice spoken with unanimity and with power by an armed nation which had shown itself worthy by a common service to the state, could no longer be insultingly disregarded even by political hostility, and the principal demands were soon taken into friendly consideration.

We may now resume the legislative changes so long claimed by the Irish Parliament.

A message from the king to the House of Commons in England bespoke its favourable consideration for the Irish discontents "respecting matters of great weight and importance; and earnestly recommended to the House to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a final adjustment as might give satisfaction to both kingdoms." \*

A similar message was presented to the Irish Commons by the Right Hon. J. Hely Hutcheson, the Secretary of State in Ireland. Mr. Hutcheson further confirmed the sincerity of the message by an earnest expression of his opinion in favour of the claim of the Irish Legislature to Independence.

On the 14th of April, 1782, the Duke of Rutland came over as Lord-Lieutenant, and was understood to bring with him the royal sanction in favour of the principal claims of Ireland. They were now again discussed on this understanding in the Irish Commons, and an address was moved by Mr. Grattan proposing the repeal of the 6th George I.; the restoration of the appellate jurisdiction to the Lords; the repeal of Poyning's Law; and only omitting to include the Judge's Bill, as having been returned already by the Privy Council. On the ground of this address the first of these resolutions was moved and carried by ministers in both Lords and Commons in the English Parliament. By this the jurisdiction of the Irish Legislature was substantially affirmed; as, by

things has turned up, not in Ireland, but in England, with which, for the present, we decline to deal.

\* Collectanea I. 220.

the repeal of the 6th George I., the power of legislation for Ireland remained between the Irish Parliament and the king. The Duke assured the House that the king would in future not permit their Bills, transmitted for the Royal Assent, to be altered by the Privy Council, and would give his assent to an Act to that effect, as also to limit the duration of the Mutiny Act. An address of thanks was proposed, in which it was unfortunately affirmed that for the time to come no constitutional question of importance could arise between the two countries. The expression was caught up by the litigious spirit of the House, and tossed with captious iteration from side to side through all the changes of a noisy debate. Mr. Grattan followed, in an eloquent speech, by moving substantially the three resolutions proposed by the meeting at Dungannon, of which he, together with Lord Charlemont, was chiefly the author. After which, the Duke of Portland, in a speech to both Houses, expressed the full consent of the Government. Thus, little more than what may be regarded as formal remained, along with personal disputes and differences of opinion which we shall find occasion to notice hereafter, so far as their interest permits or requires. The debate which followed displays how far nice differences of opinion in concerns of the utmost moment will be allowed to retard the agreement of reason, and raise trifles into importance. The division confirmed the assent of the Commons by a majority of 211 against 2. The enlarged mind of Grattan was for the acceptance of these measures as in full of all their claims. Others, among whom was Mr. Flood, were for a declaration against possibility and chance. By the free consent of Government, the independence of the Irish Legislature was amply secured. The general satisfaction was shown by a vote of the Irish Parliament of 20,000 seamen for the navy. A vote of £50,000 to Mr. Grattan for his distinguished services was added.

The next step of importance in the same year was the establishment of the Bank of Ireland, by the Act for which (20 and 21 George III.) it was provided that £600,000 in cash or debentures at 4 per cent. should be subscribed. The personal liberty of the subject was secured in the same session by the *Habeas Corpus* Act being passed.

In this parliament fresh concessions were made to the Roman Catholics.

Great suffering and discontent were felt this year (1782), ascribed mainly to the want of maritime protection—excessive taxation, the ill administration of the trial by jury, and the freedom of the press violated.

In the course of the following, an attempt was made in the English Parliament to settle on equitable terms the commercial interests of both kingdoms. Considerable attention was paid to most public questions of policy, election, the public debt, the criminal jurisdiction. Many good laws progressed, and some passed. The public debt of the kingdom was in the meantime suffered to accumulate to a ruinous excess; and a tendency in the South to insurrection gave ominous but unfelt warning of evils yet to come.

The year 1783 presented a strong excitement in the public mind of England on the subject of parliamentary reform, stimulated by the spectacle of the influences then at work in France, which ripened into its



too famous Revolution. A similar excitement showed itself in Ireland, but the re-echo was not from the people but the Volunteers.

Called together under adventitious circumstances which gave them an incidental weight in advancing the passing of measures for the commercial freedom and legislative independence of their country, the Volunteers exalted their sense of their own character, and enlarged their requisitions. Under the name of a national convention, consisting of delegates from their various corps, they sought to arrogate to themselves the deliberative functions of a parliament, and the right of dictation to the national legislature. At the instance of this body, on the 23d Nov. 1783, Mr. Flood introduced a measure for the more equal representation of the people in parliament. But the danger of yielding to armed influences and to galleries crowded with delegates in their uniforms was too apparent, and was insisted upon by the best names in Irish politics. The motion was rejected by a large majority.

Though we have declined to enter unseasonably in this place on the merits of the question thus rejected on specious grounds, we may hazard one observation respecting those grounds. The claims of the Volunteers to propose the law, was, we think, defended falsely, on the plea that in becoming soldiers they did not cease to be citizens, and that they were still the people: a fallacy which so applied set aside the fundamental principle of Law; it describes a nation armed to coerce its rulers, and is the beginning of revolution. Now, of especial importance by its growing connexion with the political latitudinarianism of our times, when it has become the lever of constitutional disorganization.—But we forbear.

Notwithstanding, this measure was again urged by its author and rejected.

Within the latter few years of this century there existed a great advance of political activity both in the improvement of the law and also in the contrary direction. A republican spirit had been for some years stealing unrecognized on the public mind. Among large classes it took the shape of justifiable discontent at real grievance, verging even to insubordination with the increased liability to be excited by the misrepresentations of the Demagogue. But in the dearth of political experience, popular discontents were to some extent concentrated and confirmed by the well-meant representations of genuine Patriots, transported too far by their ingenuity in the unsafe use of political speculation. In the theoretical exposure of possible abuses of power, they too often misled popular feeling to realize the problematic wrong. There truly existed many evils to be redressed, and of wrongs not a few, but the public sense was industriously biassed against all government.—Within a few years old discontents had revived in new forms. In the embodiment of Volunteers the prediction of Langrishe was verified, the dragon's teeth were sown; and though those men deserve the true honour of saviours of their country, anybody who may trace their subsequent career will discover in the principles they transmitted,—the rise of the United Irish. From the insurrection of the Whiteboys in 1762 to the Rebellion of 98, one insurrectionary movement succeeded another—only varying in name, parties, and locality.

The commercial privileges conceded in favour of the country, as well

as the legislative independence, were soon, on different pretences, and in different ways interfered with, neutralized or recalled. And fresh dissensions added to the flame of popular excitement, already ready to assume the character of sedition. The renewal of political discontent; together with the infringement of the recent commercial concessions, once more awakened the Volunteers, who soon merged and were lost in the United Irishmen.—Of these we shall offer some account in a memoir of their founder.

Our history is here entangled with much general statement by some writers, and confused by the gross misrepresentation of others; and would require more space than their importance may claim to set them right in this summary. The same spirit of the Parliament and People continued similarly, only with increasing energy and more decided results, to agitate the country to the end. Those results—that end, must be the subject of another chapter.

---

### CHAPTER III.

#### United Irishmen—Rebellion of '98.

WE must now approach the last scenes of this tragic history—in which the element of good and evil, of virtue and vice, often alternate, and are often strangely confused and blended; so as to give rise to the most opposing judgments; furnishing each faction with justification for misdeeds and grounds of animosity; and not unfrequently rendering it a matter of much risk to adopt or reject any statement of fact or opinion.

The natural and patriotic, but mainly abortive, efforts at independence in Ireland tended, with little exception, to reduce the people to a state of lower degradation than before. Some advances in popular education; something more in the cultivation of literature—due chiefly to the University of Dublin; the emancipation of the Roman Catholics from their cruel disabilities;—these may be regarded as the sum of the loud contention of the patriot, or the disputant, of that brief but not inglorious Parliament.

While the genius of Grattan, with his able compatriots, was slowly gaining ground against the commercial jealousies of England, and with something of the fortune of Sisiphus rolling his load up the mountain to be rolled back by its own weight, another instrumentality was gathering over the land in secret, which was to alter its destiny through many desolating trials.

We have already mentioned the origin of the United Irishmen, of whose history we shall yet have to offer some details. They formed a skilfully concocted organization for co-operation and secrecy under the chief guidance of Theobald Wolfe Tone. From this unfortunate gentleman they acquired their discipline, extension, and their ultimate destination and connection with the principles of revolutionary France. It is not, however, to be lost sight of, that the habits and principle of insurrection had been for centuries past naturalized in the soil. It was the idiosyn-



cracy of Irish nature, and it needed little to produce confederacy for good, or conspiracy for evil. Tone published a pamphlet in 1791, containing a full statement of his matured views of policy, which spread revolutionary spirit and opinion through the kingdom.

The country was now ripe for the result of these discontents and secret plottings; many causes were working together to excite every feeling into action; long cherished national animosities—expectations of plunder—vindictiveness—desire of an imaginary independence—above all, the factional hate caused by difference of religion. Of these sentiments some were quite fictitious, while others were intensely real; but so strangely worked up together that each was augmented by the rest. The ancient Irish race had become nearly extinct, though they had transmitted, by intermarriage, their language and their customs to many of those who doubtfully claimed to be their conquerors. But the real cause of popular bitterness was religious difference. From the reign of Henry II. the Church of Rome, after a long struggle, had gained an ascendant, which had in turn to give way to the Reformed Church; and these two creeds divided the allegiance of the nation. This division was widely marked by the condition of falling into coincidence with different classes. It was not that persons of rank and wealth were not in the Romish communion. These distinctions would of course operate to some extent as a separation; nor was it found, when the troubled time came on, that the educated classes, of whatever creed, took active parts; ignorance or fanaticism were necessary conditions; their prospects, or even chances of success, were not sufficiently encouraging to induce adherence; or, rather, the opposite was too apparent.

But the time approached when explosive matter pervaded the atmosphere of Europe, and every congenial spirit was touched with revolutionary frenzy. It is needless to enter on the varied expectations of those who in 1798 emulated and outvied the horrors of 1641,—it may be enough to give a summary: the splendid fiction of patriotism covered many base pretences. On the whole, the spread of republican principles, the example of France, scarcely resisted in England, together with the sanction of recent discontents, gave their pretext to the incendiaries of the day. Wrongs were not wanting; but much had been redressed, and more would have been conceded; and perseverance was only wanting to break the last link of the imaginary chain. It was not yet seen what the end of this frantic outbreak was to be; though this murderous rebellion was eventually charged on its authors as their premeditated design.

But, of course, in this conflict of motives the suspicion of authorities cannot be assumed to have wholly slept; nor could the Protestant party feel quite secure of their safety, or quite trust in assurances of which much was transparent pretence. Mutual aggression was the consequence. Be it as it may, there could not be any doubt as to what was the turn things were to take, or what designs were uppermost. Plunder—revenge for unforgotten wrongs and old-standing, but factious and revolutionary designs, conceived by fanatics and incendiaries. Violences may have been and were committed, but under such circumstances loyal men are hardly responsible for their judgments, and much less for their acts: their first obligation is the safety of the state—*ne quid*



*respublica detrimenti accipiat*—the second, the necessity of self-preservation. The mischief was in preparation long before, in a quiet time, while great concessions were being obtained by peaceful means. It may allowably have been pronounced late,—when the demoralizing principles of the French Revolution were proclaimed in every European state, backed by the savagery of the lowest rabble in Europe at that period. Such was then the crisis.

We must state a few essential preliminary facts. In 1794 a clergyman, a Mr. Jackson, imbued with democratic principles, repaired to Paris, to seek his fortune among congenial republicans; he was there counselled to try his own country, for, though previously settled in England, he was an Irishman. He would have selected England, where the example of France had struck deeply; but Ireland was known to be more within the grasp of French intrigues and of French arms. He received a letter of introduction to Mr. Rowan, then confined in Newgate for sedition, and to Tone. With these gentlemen, who had long been labouring to mature a scheme of union between Ireland and the French republic, he now entered on the consideration of the means; and as the reader is aware, they had ample material to work upon.

Jackson was soon detected by the information of a confidant, one Stone, and tried on a charge of high treason. On this Tone absconded, and found refuge in France, where he employed his talents and address in the prosecution of the same plot. He was after some time committed to the care of Hoche, by whom the future army for the invasion of Ireland was to be commanded. Under this conduct Mr. Tone's part of the plan was slowly and with many difficulties matured during another year.

The United Irishmen had adopted the addition of a military organization and exterior, and a large number of pikes were made. In 1796 several active leaders were added, and gave the conspiracy a more decided form and character,—Mr. Arthur O'Connor, the Emmets, Mr. Bond, Dr. M'Nevin, &c. From these gentlemen much information confirmatory of the view here taken was afterwards communicated to the government. It appeared then, by their sworn declarations, that there was no design of redressing Roman Catholic grievances; that, in the event of success, no ecclesiastical establishment would be permitted; and that the people did not think of Parliamentary reform, but thought they should be gainers by a revolution. It was, indeed, a natural illusion, that the low should take the place of the high, but their leaders had no such intention. There was a rotten and corrupted mass, and there were many misled by greater fools or knaves than themselves, and many acted under terror; but a large majority of the people were sound and well-affected, so far as they were permitted to be so.

The military system was framed from the United Irishmen as that body had been from the Volunteers, and by borrowing a few hints of form from the French Directory. The whole was committed to an executive consisting of five members. Immediately under these were the adjutants-general of each county, whose part it was to transmit in order through the colonels, and these to the battalions of 600 men.

It was first concerted between Arthur O'Connor and Lord Edward

Fitzgerald,\* in a meeting with Hoche on the French frontier, that Ireland should be invaded by a French fleet and an army of 15,000 men. The expedition was, however, postponed for a considerable time, and when undertaken, was, after tossing some weeks in Bantry Bay, and losing half its ships, compelled to find its way back to Brest.

In the meantime the Government obtained a true insight into the advanced progress of disaffection in Ireland. The Insurrection Act was passed. On its policy the statesmen of the time were much divided; many were impressed with a sense in favour of conciliatory measures; others more clearly apprehended the emergency; none, perhaps, truly saw the great reality—that there was no such thing as the conciliation of a seditious people under factious influences. Their aims are seldom truly expressed or rightly understood; they are those of their leader, far beyond the object of clamour. There can at the same time be no doubt that most atrocious deeds of cruelty were committed under the sanction of Government. The case was more desperate than it appeared, and the Government, acting on secret information, saw the necessity of precautions not immediately within its power. It felt the necessity of strong measures, and acted under alarm; in Ireland the Government was weak, and it was forced onwards by the ignorance and incapacity of its agents. These acted under alarm, with prejudices exasperated by terror, and witnessing lively indications in a time full of warnings, were as men walking blindfold through pit-falls.

When the Rebellion first broke out there was no adequate military force to resist it. The Yeomanry were little superior to the armed rabble they were led to resist—they were scarcely armed, and often without the advantage of drilling. They were afterwards described as more formidable to their friends than their enemies.

Meanwhile proceedings went on languidly in France, to the great impatience and annoyance of the Irish, who were with much difficulty restrained from action. The Government, alarmed by confused reports and uncertain indications, could for a long time obtain no specific information. The liberal statesmen, who called themselves the friends of the people, and the Irish Parliament, were proposing a Reform Bill, and being out-voted by a large majority, in their patriotic indignation seceded from the House.

In the beginning of 1797 a discovery took place which must have cast a broad light upon the real aspect of proceedings. Information reached the authorities of a secret meeting to be held in Belfast at a certain house on the 14th April. Thither Colonel Barber repaired with a military detachment, and found two committees sitting. He sent an officer into each of the rooms in which they were met, and they seized the papers and minutes. Among these they found the declaration and constitution of the United Irishmen, reports from several provincial and county committees, and many other documents which afforded every information that could be required, as to what was in preparation. These papers were examined in both Houses of Parliament, and im-

\* This high-minded, enthusiastic young nobleman, misled by the democratic errors of the day, was capable of better things, had not his views been early perverted by his intercourse with France in its worst days, and by his unfortunate union with the daughter of Madame de Genlis.



mediately acted upon with vigour. A considerable accession to the military force was made, and the Insurrection Act was put in force in several counties. Fear and alarm spread over the country,—the feeble, the unprotected, were terrified; those conscious of disaffection were infuriated; informers and petty tyrants were armed with all the devices of suspicion and vindictive malice to aggravate the growing horrors of the period.

The remedy went beyond the disease in severity, and fell short in efficient vigour. It was not personal harshness, but armed resistance and repression that was now to be required. The multitude were preparing for civil war, and were to be deterred by no individual examples. The proclamation which announced the determined purpose of the Government and gave a most affecting picture of the position of the peaceful inhabitants on whom the miseries of war were inflicted, had no effect on those who plundered and murdered in the licence of the republican dream. In the northern counties, where the rebellion had spread widely and struck deep root, it was yet more easily suppressed than in the south. Prompter measures were put in practice and more disciplined troops were employed. The insurgents, called the Defenders, committed acts of great atrocity, but were ultimately put down.

But it is time to enter on a brief narrative of events in the south, to which these comments are needful preliminaries; more special details of the conduct of individual agents must be reserved for our memoirs hereafter.

There was a significant proof of the French designs upon the country in their refusal to send a smaller force than 50,000 men, and in consequence they suffered the winter to pass without any help until the Government was fully on its guard, but the rebellion could no longer be put off.

In February, 1798, a military committee was appointed by the Executive Council of the insurgents, from which instructions were issued to the leaders throughout the country. In March many parts of the country were completely in possession of the rebels and others secretly disposed to join. The town of Cahir was invested by 800 horse, who kept possession, and committed an extensive plunder of arms from private houses. This was followed during the successive months of the spring and early part of summer by similar outrages in the counties of Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, Carlow, Kildare, King's County, Queen's County, and Wicklow; in all of which, arms were taken and every kind of robbery and violence perpetrated. From these counties the gentry and loyal inhabitants of all classes were compelled to seek refuge in the garrison towns. With the usual, and perhaps in some degree inevitably slow conduct of the Government, the measures of repression came too late for precaution. A statement from the castle proclaimed that open rebellion had broken out, and directing its suppression, &c. This was directed to the commander-in-chief, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, and invested him with full powers.

The hour of infatuation, on the part of the Government, was over; vigorous demonstrations were commenced (though late), but their first effect was not quite what was expected. The insurrection had been permitted to gather force, the preparations for resistance were incomplete



and feeble, and the rebel leaders, who clearly understood their position, saw that their designs must be accomplished at once, or never. To this urgent conviction, the numerous arrests already mentioned, with their generally deterring effects upon the popular spirit, must be added. In consequence of these impressions an immediate and general insurrection was resolved on.

A plan was formed for the surprise of Dublin, the artillery at Chapelizod, the camp at Loughlinstown. On the commencement of which, a signal, by the stoppage of the mails, was to raise the counties of Wicklow, Kildare, and Dublin to co-operate. Such was the plan clearly proved in the trials of the Sheares's.\* It received demonstrative evidence at the appointed time, 23d May, when it actually broke out in Dublin, and the mails were stopped and destroyed on the northern and southern roads; the attempt was defeated by the vigilance of the Executive, but every exertion was made by the party within town to give effect to the attack expected from without.

Numerous arrests had deprived the rebels of their most reputed leaders, but an impulse, not to be recalled, went through the country, and the insurrection began. The next morning there was an attack by a considerable force on the town and gaol of Naas. The attack had been expected and the guards reinforced. The rebels were repulsed with a loss of 140 men slain and many prisoners. The troops lost 30, and two officers. Next a party of 400 rebels marched from Rathfarnham along the mountains towards Clondalkin, where they were met by a party of 35 horse under Lord Roden. Many were killed and their two leaders taken. These were tried by martial law and executed.

On the 26th, a considerable body was defeated at Tallaght Hill, and 350 slain with their leader, supposed to be a French officer.

The city of Carlow was attacked on the 24th by 1,000 rebels who attempted to seize on some pieces of artillery, but failed, being defeated by Major Dennis with one company of horse and two of infantry assisted by a few parties of volunteers. Of the rebels, 400 were killed. Some of the inhabitants having fired on the soldiers out of their windows, they were with difficulty prevented from burning part of the town. In the same manner the town of Kildare was rescued from a party of rebels, of which 200 were slain by a small force under the command of Sir James Duff.

But the chief scene of the insurrection lay in Wexford and among the hills of Wicklow. On the 25th of May the rebels appeared in a body, supposed to be 15,000 strong, in the vicinity of Wexford. A party of the North Cork militia were detached from Wexford to meet them, under the command of Lieut.-Col. Foot and Major Lombard. They met at Oulart, the rebels advancing towards Wexford. The military was too weak to resist, and the position unfavourable: after a slight resistance, they were surrounded by the rebels and cut to pieces, with the exception of the colonel and two privates, and a sergeant who mounted the major's horse. The rebels got the whole of their arms and ammunition. An incident occurred worth mentioning,—a fool, who had followed the north Cork militia, when he saw Major Lombard

\* These gentlemen were basely betrayed by a Captain Armstrong, who ingratiated himself into their confidence. The younger was a man of much promise.

fall, rushed to the body, embraced it, then snatched up his sword and dispatched two of the insurgents before he fell himself.

On the 28th of May the rebels attacked Enniscorthy. In the course of the morning the disaffected set fire to some of their own houses in hopes of driving the garrison out of the town. The Yeomen infantry made a most gallant defence, and killed numbers of the rebels, though fired on themselves by the disloyal inhabitants from the windows of their houses, while the flames from the burning houses were so great that their hair was singed and their bear-skin caps were burned, and they could not see their enemies from the smoke, till they felt their pikes. By the efforts of those brave men the scale was at length turned, and the rebels were driven out of the town after successive attacks in other quarters, while they were repulsed and dispersed with considerable slaughter. The Yeomen and Protestant inhabitants, who only amounted to some hundreds, performed prodigies of valour; they lost about the third of their number, while the slain of the rebels is said to amount to 5,000.

General Lake returned to Dublin from Kilcullen, where he had received the unconditional submission of a body of rebels amounting to 4,000 men, who delivered up their arms and seven of their leaders. The rebellion spread rapidly in the south.

On the 29th of May the rebels formed two powerful camps, one at Vinegar-hill, near Enniscorthy, and the other between Wexford and Ross, at a place called the Three Rocks. An attack was made on the town of Carlow in the preceding week, 26th of May, in which a frightful slaughter of the rebels took place, many of them being hemmed in by the military at each end of the street, so that there was no possibility of escape.

The rebels attacked various lesser towns, and were generally defeated; but they were often successful in cutting off bodies of troops coming to the relief of towns likely to be attacked.

From those successes, and from their increasing numbers, said to amount to 20,000, and about to attack Wexford, the inhabitants were panic-struck, and the military being few in number, and finding that many of their supposed adherents were ready to betray them, thought their best course was to save useless bloodshed and evacuate the town. The rebels entered it on the 30th of May, and kept possession of it until the 21st of June.

The prisons were opened and their inmates set free,—among whom was Mr. B. Baganal Harvey, who was placed in command of the rebels.

It may be right here to state, in justice to the loyal Roman Catholics, that a numerous signed address was forwarded to the Lord-Lieutenant expressive of their devoted loyalty to the king and of their abhorrence of the atrocities committed by the deluded members of their communion. Lord Fingall's consistent loyalty made him obnoxious to many of the opposite party, and at one time his personal safety became endangered.

On the 5th of June the rebels attacked New Ross, having the day before taken possession of Corbet-hill, a place close to the town, and having an army of 20,000 men. In the commencement of the attack they were victorious, and, to add to the confusion of the defenders of

the town, they drove in large herds of cattle, which rushed promiscuously on all sides and impeded the military, so as to make any systematic defence impossible, and by which some cannon fell into the hands of the enemy. At length, after nine hours' fighting without intermission, the insurgents were completely routed, and with considerable loss. They had succeeded in setting fire to some thatched cabins; but this turned to their own hurt, for, the wind blowing in their direction, they were quickly enveloped in the smoke, and having drank copiously of whisky before they left Corbet-hill, they were unable to fight for their lives.

B. Baganal Harvey was deposed from the command, and he was succeeded by a person of the name of Roach. Lord Mountjoy was unfortunately killed in this engagement. The good fortune of the day turned upon the heroism and valour of General Johnson. He had two horses killed under him, and was thought to be killed himself, but, mounting a third, he unexpectedly appeared amongst his soldiers, who, in the enthusiasm of the moment, said they would follow him to victory or death, and kept their word. The slaughter of the insurgents was very great, and they lost both cannon and an immensity of pikes and muskets, besides their standards and colours.

It was on their retreat from New Ross that they perpetrated one of the most atrocious acts recorded during a rebellion in which the greatest atrocities were committed upon both sides. It was the setting fire to a barn at Scullabogue, in which 170 Protestants had taken refuge. It was said that they were instigated to the act by a priest of the name of Murphy, notorious for the barbarities he both committed and sanctioned. One man from among these doomed victims, of the name of Orange, was saved through the instrumentality of another priest who had received kindness from this man or his family. This saved individual has only recently died.

After an ineffectual assault on Arklow, the rebels, to the number of 20,000, took up a strong position in the neighbourhood of Enniscorthy, on Vinegar Hill. By this time a strong military force had been assembled against them, under General Lake. A cordon of troops was posted round the rebel position; and after a few days' delay, on the 21st of June the attack was commenced. It appeared more arduous than it really was,—and it has been observed by one of our chief authorities, that had the rebels “possessed any share of military skill, it would have been difficult, if not impracticable, to dislodge them.” They were attacked on four sides. The town of Enniscorthy, on the base of the hill, which was in their occupation, was attacked by Johnson; while Dundas leading the centre, and Duff and Needham on the right and left, ascended the hill in their respective directions. For an hour and a half the rebels maintained their position. On perceiving themselves to be in danger of being surrounded, they gave way, and fled in great disorder, and with great carnage, in their precipitate downhill flight. Of the British, about 100 were slain or wounded. The rebels soon dispersed through Wexford, among the mountains of Wicklow, and in the bordering county of Carlow.

While these and other similar transactions were in simultaneous progress, the rebels had still retained possession of the provincial city of Wexford. Their conduct, while they held this place, may best serve



to give a true character of the spirit of the Rebellion, and of those who were its promoters and actors. Amongst the atrocities committed by the rebels were the following :—In Kildare they put Mr. Crawford, a Protestant gentleman, to death, by running a pike up his body, which nearly reached his throat, and then roasted him before a large fire ; one of his young children they treated in the same manner. Near Ennis-corthy they seized a Protestant clergyman of respectability, stripped him, and put him into a pig trough and bled him to death ; after which they danced round him, and washed their feet in his blood. These are some of the fruits of a rebellion, which many of our pseudo-patriots would wantonly excite.

After numerous atrocities, perpetrated with wanton malice on the persons of individuals of every rank, age, and sex, for no other pretext than their religious profession, we must detail some of those committed in Wexford. An account was received in the provincial town, on the 26th of May, that the rebels were on their march within 12 miles. The report struck dismay to every heart and home ; all who had wife or child,—who possessed substance to be pillaged, or honour to be outraged—felt the terrible anticipation of horrors to come. A feeble garrison gave no sense of protection ; but, rather, by their anxious watch during the previous night, gave confirmation to the prevailing terror.

When the report spread that the rebels were burning the houses of the Protestant families through the country, all the neighbouring families came flocking into the town, with their portable property. With these the Protestant inhabitants of the town crowded into the shipping in the harbour. The vessels were quickly filled, while crowds of trembling fugitives were yet pouring in, and finding no shelter ; for the houses were now being set on fire. On seeing this, the vessels put out, and stood towards the mouth of the harbour. Before long they were signalled by a white flag that the rebels were partly in possession of the town. Then a council was held by the feeble garrison, and it was resolved that they could not defend it. Two gentlemen, Mr. Richards, a lawyer, and the Mayor, were authorized to surrender the town to the rebels, and save the lives of the inhabitants. To this stipulation the rebels agreed. On this the soldiers were allowed to escape unmolested, and were accompanied by all the unmarried yeomen to Duncannon Fort where they found refuge.

The signal from the town was immediately answered by the vessels, notwithstanding the entreaty of their fugitive suppliants. They at once stood in for the quay, and landed the trembling crowd, who were, without intermission, handed over to the mercy of the disorderly rabble, which thronged the streets, many of whom were drunk. The greater part of these ruffians were in the dress of labourers, with green cockades and white ribbons round their hats. The houses of the principal inhabitants were presently attacked,—the Custom House, the houses of the Collector, of Captain Boyd, and of the Rev. Mr. Miller,—and were stripped to bare walls.

We shall now return to the narrator of these events, and give, as a faithful specimen of the greater part of these occurrences, the personal narrative of his own adventures. Having described his compulsory land-

ing on the quay, he proceeds:—"Following closely the horse of my conductor, I passed safe, with my wife and child, through this terrible scene, to my house. I gave him my musket, and he rode off. My wife lay down on the bed, and I crept under it,—thinking to hide myself in case I should be sought after. I had not been in this situation more than ten minutes, when I heard my name called, and a sound of feet on the stairs. Presently the door opened, and one Patrick Murphy, with six others, all armed, came into the room. This Murphy was a near neighbour of mine, and had always professed a great regard for me. My wife, on seeing him, threw herself off the bed with the child in her arms, and fell on her knees, entreating them to spare me. One of them swore if she did not say where I was, he would blow her brains out. On hearing this, from fear of her being injured, I showed myself, and was immediately seized and dragged down stairs. I was conducted to the barracks, and put into a room with eight others, all expecting soon to be put to death. After remaining in this situation about an hour, one of the rebels, armed with an old bayonet on the end of a pole, made a thrust at my throat; but it was prevented from entering by a thick cushion under my cravat. He then wounded me slightly below my hip. At that moment Councillor Richards (who had been obliged to join the rebels to save his own life), came into the room with Mr. B. Harvey, and seeing the state I was in, requested him to save me; which he did by taking me out with him, to a Mr. Hughes, at the Foley. I went up a back staircase, and got into a small room at the top of the house. Soon my pursuers came into the room; but I was concealed in a cupboard, and for that time escaped their fury. Thus disappointed, I heard them propose to set fire to the house; but this was overruled. In that situation I continued till ten o'clock at night; I then ventured out, and got over the rocks to a place called Maudlintown, near a mile from Wexford, to the house of an old woman of the name of Cole, whom I thought I could trust, and begged her in the most earnest manner that she would permit me to remain concealed there till affairs were a little settled. She told me she would, as long as she could without danger to herself, and that she would go into the town and see how matters went; which she accordingly did, and returned, saying that the insurgents were searching all the houses for Protestants, and committing them to gaol; and if I should be found there, they would kill her, and burn the house. I got out at her back door, and went about two miles across the country, but soon heard voices behind me calling on me to stop and I should have mercy. I turned round and saw six men advancing with pikes in their hands. They seized me and conducted me back to Wexford and put me into gaol, in which I found about two hundred and twenty Protestants.

"Towards the evening, a fellow of the name of Dick Monk, who had formerly been a shoeblack in the town, but now was raised by the rebels to the rank of a captain, came into the gaol and bid us prepare our souls for death, for that all of us, except such as, upon examination, he should release, would be put to death at twelve o'clock that night. The manner of his examining was two-fold: first politically, and then religiously. The form of his political examination was this:—Query, 'Are you straight? Answer, As straight as a rush. Q. Go on then.



A. In truth, in unity, and in liberty. Q. What have you got in your hand? A. A green bough. Q. Where did it first grow? A. In America. Q. Where did it bud? A. In France. Q. Where are you going to plant it? A. In the crown of Great Britain.' The preceding questions and answers appear to have been a part of the *United Irishmen's* catechism by which they knew each other.

"Monk, having gone through this examination, selected six to be saved, and took them with him out of the prison; and the situation of those that remained can better be imagined than described. No one, however, came near us that night. Next morning we were brought some potatoes and water, which proved a seasonable relief.

"On June the 4th, the gaoler came in and took us into the yard. As soon as I came out he said, 'Mr. Jackson, I believe you know what we want of you.' I answered, 'yes, I suppose I am going to die.' I then fell upon my knees, begging, that if that were the case, I might be allowed to see my wife and child. He swore that I should not, that I was not then going to die, but that a man was to die at six o'clock that evening, and that he did not know any more proper person to execute him than me and two others. We were then carried back to our cells, and spent the day in prayer till six o'clock, at which time, being brought to the great door, we found the prisoner, Murphy, with nearly 1,000 men about him. The dead march was struck up and beat from the gaol to the place of execution, which was a mile and a half off, on the other side of the bridge on a wide strand. An order was then given to form a half circle with an opening to the water. The poor man was directed to kneel down, with his back to the water and his face to us, which he did, with his hands clasped. The muskets were then called for. The first appointed to fire was one Matthews; and it was remarkable, the ball missed three times. A common sporting gun was then brought and fired by Matthews, and the ball hit the poor man in the arm. I was next called upon, and two men advanced, one on each side of me, and held cocked pistols to my head; two also stood behind me with cavalry swords, threatening me with instant death if I missed the mark. I fired, and the poor man fell dead. When it was over, a proposal was made that I should wash my hands in his blood, but this was overruled; and they said, as I had done my business well I should go back.

"On June the 20th we heard a horrid noise at the gaol, and a demand for the prisoners. Eighteen or twenty were immediately taken out, and in about half an hour the rebels returned for more victims. In the whole, they took ninety-eight. Those that were last called out were seventeen in number. Mr. Daniel and Mr. Robinson, both gaugers; Mr. Atkinson, a tide-waiter; Matthews and Gurley, who were with me at the execution of Murphy, and myself, were included in this lot. We were marched to the bridge. The blood of those who had been already executed upon this spot (eighty-one in number), had more than stained, it streamed upon the ground about us. They first began the bloody tragedy by taking out Mr. Daniel, who, the moment he was touched with their pikes sprang over the battlements of the bridge into the water, where he was shot. Mr. Robinson was the next, he was piked to death. They ripped open the belly of poor Mr. Atkinson,



and in that condition he ran several yards, when falling on the side of the bridge, he was piked; thus they proceeded till they came to Gurley, who was next to me. While they were torturing him General Roach rode up in great haste and bid them beat to arms, informing them that Vinegar Hill was beset, and that reinforcements were wanting. This operated like lightning upon them; they all instantly quitted the bridge, and left Mr. O'Connor, an organist, Mr. Hamilton, the Bailiff of the town, and myself, on our knees. The rebel guard soon came to us and took us back to the gaol, which we entered with hearts overflowing with gratitude to the Great Creator for our late wonderful preservation. For the arrival of the troops we looked with some hope and extreme anxiety the whole night, till about five o'clock in the morning, when we heard the joyful sound of cannon. Soon after the king's troops entered the town and put an end to this scene of barbarity.\*

We must pass more lightly over the lesser details of the rebellion in this quarter, simply adding the fate of the leaders, Mr. Baganal Harvey and Mr. Colclough, who, with Mr. Grogan, took refuge in a cave on one of the Saltee Islands near the entrance of Wexford harbour. Here they were soon discovered, and brought to trial and executed, and their estates confiscated. These events may be said to have crushed the rebellion in Leinster. In the northern counties it was less violent and of comparatively less duration. Though in Armagh the same delusions reigned for a season, they were soon dispelled by the general sobriety of the people. The cruelties inflicted on the Protestants in Leinster by Romish inhabitants, exposed too plainly their intentions respecting them, nor were these designs unaccompanied by many express declarations. The spirit of disloyalty was soon extinguished in Ulster, where it had fewer converts, and those less tainted by fanaticism. The extirpation of Protestants was foremost among the sanguinary announcements of the Dublin, Wexford, and Wicklow rebels in the confidence of their strength; and though in this they were discountenanced by their aristocracy, and partially by their priests, yet among these latter there was not wanting the tacit consent of a general understanding, confirmed by numerous instances of priestly leading. From such we abstain; it is not on such a charge that we would at this time impeach the Roman priesthood.

By the Insurrection Act, the magistrates of any county were authorized to proclaim it out of the King's Peace, by which it became subject to military law, but it was not generally acted upon until the month of November, during which interval fearful atrocities had been committed.

There was at this time a regularly established communication with the French Directory, and in the summer of 1797, in consequence of a special message from that body, Dr. Mc'Nevin had been sent to Paris to consult for a new invasion of Ireland. He came with full powers for the final adjustment of the expedition. Instead of Bantry Bay, the port of the former venture, he advised that the expedition should sail for Oyster Haven, a more convenient locality for the reduction of Cork. Mc'Nevin undertook that the cost of the expedition should be defrayed by the Irish Republic. It was urged on the French Directory that the

\* Collectanea Politica, page 340.

separation from England should be insisted upon as a preliminary of peace. Mc'Nevin was authorized to negotiate a loan of half a million on the credit of the Republic. He represented, in a memorial to the Directory, that 150,000 men were united and organized in Ulster alone.

When it was ascertained that the French fleet had left the port of Brest, Sept. 17, a despatch was sent with notice to Commodore Sir John Borlase Warren, in command of the *Canada*, a 74 gun ship, and of the *Foudroyant* of 80. While on the look-out Sir John was joined in succession by six frigates. At noon, on the 12th, the French squadron which came in sight at a great distance, was made out to consist of one 74 and 8 frigates, to windward, bearing to the north-east. The British ships gave chase, but they lay scattered over a hollow sea, and got on with slow progress. Next day the wind fell, and the enemy was again sighted on the north-east. They now soon bore down and formed a close line on the starboard tack. The British vessels were signalled to take close order on the same tack, and form as they came up. Such was the position of the hostile squadrons when the fight began by three foremost British frigates opening a warm cannonade on the *Hoche*, which was supported by two frigates, but soon crippled and compelled, after a brave defence, to lower her colours. The other ships having all sustained enough of damage to indicate the chances of the fight, and seen the 74 and another ship in possession of the British, bore away for the French coast, and were pursued by the disengaged ships and frigates.

It does not belong to our historical sketch to enter on the narrative of the separate fates of the fugitive vessels. We may refer the curious reader to "*James's Naval History*"\* for an interesting account of these several adventures. It will be enough here to say they were all separately overtaken and captured, after gallant resistance, in single combat with their pursuers. We may add, that on board of the *Loire*, a gun frigate, was found complete clothing for 3,000 men, with muskets, sabres, cartridges, and ammunition. Tone, with three other Irishmen, were on board the *Hoche*; he took an active part in the attack, exposing himself to the British fire, as if all depended upon that day's success, while he was too sagacious not to see the utter hopelessness of the attempt. After valiant fighting on both sides the *Hoche* surrendered, and all on board were taken prisoners. Tone, in the garb of a French officer, was not at first recognised, but being invited to breakfast by the Earl of Cavan, the Lord-lieutenant of the county, a former acquaintance present, knew him at once, and addressed him by name. He was of course arrested, and sent to Dublin. We may refer to his memoir for what befell him there.

We must, as briefly as we may, close this tragic tale of carnage and atrocity, with the fate of the most notorious of its accessories and victims.

There were arrests of several of the conspirators at the first discovery of the conspiracy. These persons had as yet committed no overt act of rebellion; and though clearly exposed to conviction of treasonable conspiracy, were, under the circumstances, considered fair objects of a treaty at the same time politic and merciful. The vindic-

\* Vol. ii. p. 227



tive ministry of the criminal law was thought to have done enough for example, and the members of the executive, while they shrank from the crowded repetitions of judicial slaughter thus imposed, saw that the dreadful necessity might happily be averted by a compromise of a serviceable kind. It was therefore now proposed to spare the lives of Bond, Neilson, Dr. M'Nevin, Addis Emmet, and Arthur O'Connor, on condition of their giving all the information in their power; to which they all agreed, stipulating for permission to leave the kingdom, and also that they should not be required to compromise any individual. The information thus received was printed: it contained, among other statements, that the main intent of the leaders of the Rebellion was not the apparent one of emancipating the Papists by whose agency they aimed to succeed; but that it was their final object, when they should gain the mastery, to separate the kingdom from the British Crown, put down the landlords, and all churches, and erect a republic. These gentlemen, on being liberated, published a manifesto exciting the people to farther resistance. Mr. Plunket, then practising at the Irish bar, and a member of Parliament, spoke with just indignation of the ingratitude of persons who were, as he said, "singular instances of mercy," and urged, "that every step should be taken to prevent these State prisoners from corrupting the public mind."\*

The principal victims who suffered the penalty of their guilt may be more particularly noticed hereafter. They were Messrs. John and Henry Sheares, M'Cann, W. M. Byrne-Jackson, who died from poison when brought up to receive his sentence. Their fate and trials spread dismay over the whole kingdom, and for a few years cleared the stage for other actors in a more peaceful drama.

These tragic events were to be the means, under Providence, of placing this unsettled country for the next half century under the shelter of constitutional law, by the union of its destinies with England, that land of perfect freedom and true religion,—by the legislative union of the two kingdoms.

Through the whole of this sanguinary contest, it is memorable that the promised aid from France never appeared. Had the expeditions from Toulon and the Dutch port sailed, and the force under Humbert landed a month sooner, while the improvidence of the administration neglected the means of defence, the destruction would have been wide-spread; and though we cannot agree with those who have imagined that the country must have been lost, there can be little reasonable doubt of a grievous slaughter among the imperfectly armed and undisciplined troops which were only strong for the rabble army of Wexford and Wicklow.

Providentially, the first fanatic activity of the French revolutionary zeal for propagating its doctrines was at this time somewhat subsided, and as its field of enterprise expanded, its power of attending to minor interests was contracted. A direct invasion of England soon became a favourite fancy of the ambitious man who wielded the destinies of France, and controlled the progress of the Revolution. To attack England by the subjugation of Ireland was still too obvious and seemingly easy an expedient to be quite thrown away, when it offered itself

\* Life and Speeches of Lord Plunket, by his Grandson, page 94.

to the yoke. We may thus sum the aid sent. A large fleet had been, within recent memory, lost to France—another trial seems to have been doubtfully ventured. A small army, said to be part of a large one, landed at Killala, under General Humbert, in August. They were joined by the Romish peasantry in many thousands. They, however, conducted themselves peaceably and with great order, making headquarters of Bishop Stock's palace, in which they received all hospitable treatment, and committed no violence. They posted a green flag over the Bishop's gate, with the inscription, "Erin go bragh."

From Killala they marched, after some days, to Castlebar, their force amounting to 1,100, with a large body of Irish, whom they clothed and armed. At Castlebar the English garrison retreated, under the mistaken notion caused by the appearance of superior forces,—their Irish allies, whom they had dressed in French clothing, seeming to be Frenchmen at a distance. With this discouragement the soldiers of Lake, when attacked on the 27th, gave way and retired, leaving six pieces of cannon and a few men. Humbert next directed his march towards Tuam; but he presently found that his route was likely to be intercepted by a strong force under Lord Cornwallis, who menaced his front not far from Castlebar. Humbert, on this, made a circuitous retreat, to favour the escape of the Irish, whom he had found more an impediment than a help. But at Ballinamuck his rearguard was overtaken, early on the morning of the 8th of September, by a division of Lake's army under General Crawford, by whom they were summoned to surrender. On refusal they were attacked. On this 200 of the French, thinking themselves unsupported, threw down their arms; but, finding their mistake, presently recovered and fired on the British officers, who were approaching on the assumption of a surrender,—by which the General was wounded. On this General Lake ordered up reinforcements, and a fight began, which lasted but half an hour, when, the rest of the British force coming into sight, the French surrendered. The rebels, who were scattered in all directions, were pursued, and suffered severely. The French prisoners amounted to 884; 93 of the rebels were taken, with three of their leaders.

It was reported that, after the previous fight in Castlebar, Humbert caused three of the Irish to be hanged for plundering; and that one who attempted to massacre a prisoner was cut down by the French.

The report of Humbert's failure does not appear to have made any serious impression in France. Eight days after this fight at Ballinamuck a French brig appeared off the coast of Donegal. Amongst others, it contained General Rey and Napper Tandy. It is manifest that they came in the expectation to find the former party established in full possession of the country. On learning the reality they were much disconcerted; and finding the people little inclined for any further trial of their strength, they re-embarked.

During the progress of the rebellion, and even after its termination, strong measures were found necessary for the purpose not only of showing the deluded populace the hopelessness of their cause, but also the inevitable retribution which must follow upon the atrocities planned and perpetrated under the abused name of patriotism.

The loss of life on the side of the insurgents has been said to amount



to 30,000, and this was in itself a stern fact that needed no comment, and must have been brought home to the hearts of thousands.

The English Government, therefore, wished to relax somewhat of its rigour, while it was at the same time considered desirable that a military man should continue at the head of affairs in Ireland.

The Marquis of Cornwallis, who had succeeded Lord Camden in June as Lord-Lieutenant, sent a message by Lord Castlereagh to the House of Commons, saying that he had received His Majesty's commands to offer "a free pardon for all offences committed on or before a certain day, upon such conditions, and with such exceptions, as might be compatible with the general safety;" but adding, that "these offers of mercy to the repentant were not to exclude measures of rigour against the obstinate."

The system of moderation and mercy pursued at this period was attended with the happiest results. A Bill of general amnesty was passed in that session, with the exception of Napper Tandy and about thirty more, who had been deeply involved in the rebellion, and had fled to France.

The crisis was now approaching, and, as is ever the case in conspiracies of any extent, there will be persons found who, either from high and conscientious motives, or from the basest imaginable, will reveal the secrets of the plot and put the government on its guard. It is possible to suppose a young and ardent mind, devoid of sound judgment and inflamed with an imaginative love of country, forgetful of what would tend to its solid good, being led into a conspiracy by the specious representations of its wily plotters, and recoiling from the sanguinary means by which it is to be accomplished. In such a case, not a common one, there can be no doubt but that the implied and expected fidelity would be "more honoured in the breach than the observance."

We are not made aware of the exact motives which impelled Mr. Reynolds, a sworn United Irishman, and formerly a silk-mercier in Dublin, to make a revelation, early in the year, to Mr. Cope, with whom he had some pecuniary transactions, of the formidable preparations which were then in progress for the approaching outbreak. He revealed the proposed meeting of some of the leading conspirators at the house of a Mr. Oliver Bond on the 12th of March 1798, and Mr. Cope communicated this fact to the Government, and on the appointed day the house was surrounded, and fourteen of the conspirators were apprehended, including Dr. M'Nevin, Counsellor Emmet, and their secretary, Mr. M'Can.

Mr. Bond died in prison, and Mr. M'Can was executed; but the others, as before stated, made a compact with Government (proposed by themselves) that they would give the most ample details of every circumstance connected with the rebellion that did not involve individual breach of faith, on condition of their own lives being spared, and their being permitted to leave the country. Though in many respects high-minded gentlemen, they were amongst those who lent themselves to the delusion that political dishonesty was not inconsistent with personal honour. They planned amongst themselves to give, in many instances, a garbled account to the Government, though in the main

features they had to adhere to truth ; and they afterwards printed a pamphlet giving a highly coloured view of the statements they had made, and of their own unaltered opinions, and endeavoured, as far as in them lay, to sow the seeds of continued sedition ; yet they had the effrontery to complain that the Government did not fulfil their part of the compact to the letter, because they were not at once liberated, after showing how unfit they were to be turned loose upon society, with France still threatening our coasts. They were removed to Fort George, where every lenity was shown them, and where they became better and wiser men, as was made evident by their subsequent history. On being ultimately liberated they removed to America, where they obtained both position and character.

The next thread of Ireland's tangled history is a many-coloured one,—that involving the union with Great Britain, which, however beneficial it may have been in many respects, was yet carried undoubtedly by bribery and corruption. It must be the subject of another chapter.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE UNION.

Arguments for and against Union—Alliance contracted between Irish Priests and English Liberals—Consummation of it in Catholic Emancipation—Resulting inconsistency—Impossibility of two independent legislatures—Scotch precedent for Union—The necessity for unification of the empire proved by the Rebellion—Roman Catholics consent to the abolition of a Protestant parliament—Late repentance—Pitt's resolve—Startling opposition—Manner of overcoming it—The measure passes—Principal provisions—Compact with Catholics—They do not receive the price.

THE nineteenth century opens upon our history with considerable changes in the social and political constitution of Ireland. The Legislative Union, carried after much opposition, was the beginning of a long succession of party struggles, still accompanied by the slow progress of improvement in national industry, manners, and general civilization.

This great national measure was the result of many less fortunate and less honourable causes ; the restless disaffection of the people—worked upon by demagogues and plotting incendiaries, the intrigues and divisions of party leaders, and the turbulence and venality of the lower House of Parliament in the later stages of its existence. It fell by its degeneracy. The Union was carried chiefly by the corruption of its members. With this, it is true, it had lost the high and noble character gained by its conduct in '82, and nineteen counties joined in petitioning for the Union.

There existed a strong national feeling against the proposed measure : to the recollection of the services of the parliaments of the former period, under the influence of Grattan and his truly patriotic allies in the day of the Volunteers—in the sense of national pride which revolted from the imagined reproach of inferiority and dependence in the transfer of civil power—more real and serious objections added their weight ; it was felt that with the Parliament, the wealth and influence of the Irish aristocracy should be transferred to the



dominant country, and the land, thus deprived of their countenance and expenditure, suffer the extremes consequent on neglect and desertion ;—that the many commercial interests still at issue between the two countries would be more decidedly governed according to the known jealousy of English merchants.

On the other hand, it had become matter of experience during several recent Parliaments, that the difficulties of conducting the administration of Government were becoming formidably increased by the wilful insubordination and irritable factious partizanship of the Commons. To those who could look with sober judgment on the operation of political causes, many prospective advantages were discerned from a Union which, while it would strengthen and facilitate the working of both, must impart ultimately to the less favoured country many of the advantages of the more privileged one.

The intrigue and the venality by means of which the Union was effected, in opposition to so much national prejudice and the earnest remonstrance of the most influential of those who were the great leaders of popular opinion, manifest the want of public virtue, and prove the thorough corruptness of a House of Commons that could so soon be won by title, place, and pension, as to vote its own extinction.

It is the truest vindication of the political sagacity, or, at least, of the principle, of those eminent persons who resisted the Union, that its main advantages to Ireland were not likely to be immediate, but, in a great measure, remotely prospective; while, at the same time, the apprehended disadvantages and evil results lay on the surface,—and if they cannot justly be said to have actually come to pass, they were to all appearance not improbable. If these dreaded consequences had actually followed, they could hardly be compensated by any immediate benefit that followed from the Union. It was then feared that the effects of this measure would amount to what has since been termed centralization of the entire constitutional functions—administrative or commercial, or social or territorial—in the English Government; thus leaving a country such as Ireland then was entirely at the mercy of English interests. It may not now, in discussing this question, be sufficiently called to mind what Ireland truly was. A surface of (perhaps) bright civilization, overlying a dark depth of ignorance, disaffection, and superstition. There was no reacting power of a constitutional nature; but there was a smouldering depth of national hate—a fierce remembrance of ancient wrongs—a slavish devotion to an alien domination. To remove from the scene all the elements and influences of a nascent civilization, was to those who, not unreasonably, entertained such an apprehension, alarming enough. In looking upon the Union on this more general principle, it was not difficult to apprehend that some considerable approach to equality in the condition of the two peoples should be first attained before a concentrated government would be advantageous to both. It seemed plain that the weaker would become subject, in a degree, to the stronger; and to this the national pride of a country tenacious of its ancestral traditions would not submit. Many of the benefits expected from the Union were yet far off, and many of the evils soon set in. There was still rebellion—followed long by agrarian disturbances—political and sectarian agitation, and a long period

during which the Government of the country could only be carried on by concessions fatally reacting upon the Constitution of England.

To attain the genuine advantages of the Union, it was necessary that a new proprietary should grow up—that there should arise a civilized middle-class, on a more extended scale; that the people should cease to be in a state of barbarism; and that, instead of an abnormal jurisdiction, vibrating between laxity and despotic severity, there should be a strong unswerving administration of justice and government.

The space at our command in this present abridged recast of our history does not permit of much detail on the separate provisions of the Act of Union. They were perhaps correct to the utmost length compatible with the relative condition of the two countries,—little fitted by manners, habits, industry, commerce, civil or fiscal constitutions, to form an integral nationality. The frameworks of either were mutually unadapted, and the completion of the measure was remitted to future legislation.

These defects were much aggravated by the continuation of animosities and national prejudices beyond the reach of Acts of Parliament to remove: the apocryphal traditions of remote antiquity, shaped for the purpose of those whose object it was to create popular discontent; the differences of religion, acknowledging each a different allegiance and worship; but still more by the principle of democratic insubordination which had its rise in the French and American Revolutions of the preceding years, and which cast its shadow over the civilized world, and spread disintegrating influences of which the end yet remains to be seen. Of these counteractions the effect was soon apparent. From the very beginning of the union of the two kingdoms, the work of discord began. Occasion soon offered for the promotion of factious animosity, mostly beginning in the private views of demagogues, but finding pretext in the assumption of popular wrongs or national grievances. With all its political seemings of advantage to both kingdoms, the Union was destined to be the means of giving vast development and activity to the numerous elements of disorder with which they abounded. The discontents which more or less found place in every class of Irishmen found congenial complaints and factious fellow-working on the other side of the channel. The Roman Catholics, apparently contented with the privileges conferred upon them in 1793, when they were admitted to the parliamentary franchise, and the most galling disabilities were removed, now had their eyes turned to the prospect of further advantages to be gained by an increasing political power. Such had been the immemorial policy of the see of Rome.—The Romish priesthood in Ireland had long been reduced to inactivity by the conscious weakness of their party. Shortly after the Union, however, a new activity seized upon the mind of the educated classes, and soon the party conflict which had been waged for and against the Union rose into a still fiercer agitation for a further extension of its advantages. The priests and demagogues of the Roman Catholic party combined in agitating for what they called Emancipation. As they advanced toward their objects, they swelled the democratic body, and gave new force and virulence to its power. Through all these stormy workings, some tendencies grew more apparent to



popularize the Legislature and subvert the Established Church. Both objects were favoured by the junction of the several parties we have here glanced at.

The first contest of this period, from which all drew their main effect, was Catholic Emancipation, of which it will be here enough to say, that it threw open the gate of the Legislature to the Roman Catholics, and, through them, to the democracy of all the counties of Britain.

It may not be foreign to the main purpose of this introduction to observe, that at the same time with the events related in the latter pages of our former introduction, those momentous changes were setting in from which the entire social and political aspect of the United Kingdom in the following period was to take its character. To this, as we have shown, the revolutionary notions which became popular, and had their origin, as before stated, in France and America, during the previous century, entered largely into every popular discontent, and gave a language to every stump orator. And as from this period our common interest in the fortunes of the United Kingdom has its beginning, we may cursorily trace the joint results—a course the more consistent with our contracting space.

The first great advance of liberalism was due to the admission of the Roman Catholics to political power. It added formidable weight to the democratic element introduced by the Reform Bill of 1832, and thus favoured the Roman policy for the subversion of the Church. The arrogant pretensions of the demagogue grew with the sense of power,—speculation made bolder advances, and bade defiance to every stronghold of conscience or maxim venerated by mankind.

The popular party in Ireland gathered strength and violence from the gradual junction of English discontents and factious movements. A fatal error committed by the Government had the effect of promoting and seriously aggravating this evil progress. It was thought that the people might be governed by concession—a method which to the ignorant conveyed the impression of fear on the part of Government, and gave what seemed to be victory to the cause of a faction, and to their leaders a motive for fresh exaction. Honourable epithets were not wanting to repay the demagogue for his exertions—cheers of the rabble glorified the spouting rhetorician of the street, or the Forum, or the Palace yard. In course of time he became formidable, or was thought worth bribing with office; or (as happened in a notorious instance) was compensated by a voluntary self-imposed taxation of a duped populace.

Thus the main causes of the popular clamour in Ireland which soon followed the Union became augmented by the voice of the democratic party in England, and that remarkable alliance commenced which has lasted up to the present time, of the ultra Protestant dissenters of the one country with the ultra Roman Catholics of the other. That alliance begun in Ireland, was soon extended to England, and has ever since been growing influential in proportion as the powers between whom it was established have gained political strength. Each party, though diametrically opposite in their aspirations for the future, has helped the other to obtain its objects; thus giving to the liberal legislation of the last half-century a character of curious inconsistency.

The right hand of the liberal party has not known what its left hand has done; with one it has proposed to give ascendancy to ultramontaniam, while with the other admitting Jews and infidels to the parliament of a Christian country, and gradually removing from common life the sanction of religion. This immoral alliance has been that of light (so called) and darkness, and a double inroad has been made upon the institutions of the country.

We must now, in the brief space which the arrangement of our history will permit, take a brief retrospect of the state of affairs, and notice the various influences which led to the Union, and the manner in which that measure was accomplished by ministers. It was an age of parliamentary corruption. In the English parliament, Government was able to purchase a majority (as in 1763), and the king himself spent a considerable sum from his private purse in securing votes in the House of Commons. Ireland was ruled by an assembly still more corruptible, in which almost every man had his price, the average value of a vote being £200. The whole Government of Ireland was a mass of jobbery and corruption, and the concentration of this was to be found in the national parliament. Springing altogether out of close boroughs and counties, the representation of which was frequently sold like the advowsons of livings, and in which freedom of election had not yet been conceived of, it was worthy of the constituency it represented; and its rottenness, which was incurable, afforded both an argument for its abolition and a means of effecting it. An assembly that had habituated itself to selling the interests of the country it pretended to represent at last bartered away its own existence. But on the other hand, the extreme corruption of the Irish parliament, and the facility which it afforded ministers of passing their measures, for a while protected it from the fate that the nominal independence gained in 1782 rendered inevitable. So long as it was merely the echo of the Parliament sitting at Westminster repeating its decisions, a subservient shadow to follow it in all its motions, it would still have been possible, had no other events intervened, for the Irish parliament to have protracted its existence. But the moment it should have availed itself of the independence procured for it by the bayonets of the volunteers, the choice would have lain between reshackling it with Poyning's law and the act of George the First, or an unconstitutional suppression,—a *coup d'état*. Before, however, it had shown a tendency to insubordination; before it had time to purge itself of its corruptness, if it ever could have done so, and exercise the independence with which it had been fatally gifted in a manner inconsistent with the policy of England, affairs in Ireland assumed such a complexion as determined ministers to anticipate the unconstitutional mode which it might have been necessary to adopt at a later period, by inducing the Irish parliament to vote for a union with the parliament of Great Britain, and thus avoid a more ignominious end, and save the national dignity, by voting itself out of existence. The Union was, in the nature of things, inevitable; but whether it was an inevitable evil or an inevitable good is a distinct question to which we have already devoted some consideration, our conclusion being that the immediate consequences of it were prejudicial to Ireland, while the ultimate ad-



vantages promised to us have not as yet been realized. It is sometimes necessary, however, to sacrifice the interests of a province to the interests of an empire; the policy which is beneficial to the whole is generally injurious to some of the parts. The weak must always be sacrificed to the strong; and being in the nature of things, it can scarcely be called an injustice that it should so happen.

The existence of an obvious precedent in the union of the parliament of Scotland with that of England must have made it evident to any one who regarded the question historically, that sooner or later Ireland must submit to the same fate. The fact that Scotland had placed her king over England, and had, it might almost be said, annexed the latter country, saved Scotch pride, but did not render the precedent less conclusive with regard to the Irish Parliament. Vast and unforeseen changes made it necessary to act on the precedent, almost with abruptness, and precipitated the slow progress of history. Those changes we have already reviewed, but have now to show their bearing on the question of the Union. The Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1793, while it was regarded by some of the most patriotic, as for instance the Earl of Charlemont, as having gone too far, instead of satisfying those whose chains it loosened, gave them a desire to be entirely rid of them. The professional demagogues and promoters of sedition were alarmed lest an extension of the measures already adopted should pacify the country and spoil their trade. Accordingly the United Irishmen hastened on their schemes of invasion, and redoubled their efforts to excite animosity to England, while, on the other hand, the Government of the Duke of Portland commissioned Grattan to draw out a bill of Catholic Emancipation, and Earl Fitzwilliam, as Lord-lieutenant, was sent over to Ireland to carry it. The hopes of the Irish nation were raised to the highest, when suddenly Fitzwilliam was recalled by the desire of the King, to whom a political enemy, Chancellor Fitzgibbon, through the English Chancellor Loughborough, had suggested the incompatibility of the proposed measure with his coronation oath. Lord Camden was appointed Lord Fitzwilliam's successor to oppose the progress of the bill of which the Government was itself promoter, and it was accordingly thrown out upon the second reading. The folly of the fitful policy by which Ireland has always been governed received in this perhaps its highest exemplification. The Government voluntarily offered a boon to the Roman Catholics, for which there had not been at the moment any extreme or pressing demand, and which might have been withheld without danger to the country, and then withdrew it apparently from mere caprice, the influence which caused its withdrawal not being of a nature to appear on the face of the transaction. The natural consequence was, that the latent discontents which had been felt by the Roman Catholics were roused into a furious storm of rage and disappointment; and the attempt to take the wind from the sails of the United Irishmen (an operation that generally results in the discomfiture of those by whom it is attempted), had the effect of bearing them to their destination with unhoped-for celerity. Grattan withdrew from public life with expressions of bitter disappointment. The majority of the nation, belonging to the Romish persuasion, ceased to hope for the redress of

what they considered their grievances by constitutional means. It was an era of revolutions. The French Directory pretended to be willing to assist oppressed nationalities; in reality, making revolution the stalking horse of conquest. The United States had succeeded in shaking off the grasp of England, and presented to the Irish nation an example of successful rebellion. Ninety-eight arrived; a fierce and bloodthirsty insurrection was put down with a ferocity that has no parallel in modern history, and civil was converted into a religious war by the policy of arming the Protestants against their Roman Catholic neighbours. But no doubt England passed through a great danger; the winds of heaven fought for us and guarded our shores, for had Hoche's army landed in Ireland the insurrection might have been turned into a revolution. This great peril suggested to the minds of English statesmen, as a measure to be immediately accomplished, the complete union of the two countries by the absorption of the Irish into the English parliament. The attempt to escape endangered the resolution to bind more tightly, to unify more completely. Ireland was henceforth to be reduced to a province of England, and deprived of that show of independent nationality which it had dreamt of making a reality. Every thing that tended to prolong this dream was injurious to the country. A parliament that was competent to refuse supplies, should England be engaged in war, or even to vote secession, was inconsistent with facts. It was misleading. It actually occurred in 1788 that the two legislatures differed on the Regency Bill. The centralization of parliamentary power was shown to be necessary by the formidable danger which the country had just escaped. From the Irish Roman Catholics, who had been crushed in the late struggle under the heel of England, no opposition was now to be anticipated; the morrow of a rebellion is the best time for making changes, which if deferred, might again unsettle the country. Nor was it altogether ungrateful to the Roman Catholics, by whom it must have been looked on rather as the removal than the infliction of a grievance; for although they had been admitted to the elective franchise, they could elect none but Protestants. The College Green Parliament represented the ascendancy of the Protestant part of the nation, and it was to this portion, if to any, that the Act of Union was a blow. It is a question indeed how far the abolition of so corrupt a legislature was a grievance to any party in the State; but to the Roman Catholics it was on the contrary rather a boon. Had Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform been passed before the Union, under Lord Fitzwilliam's regime, the difficulties in the way of effecting it constitutionally would probably have proved insurmountable. It was only after Catholic Emancipation had been conceded that Ireland began to regret the loss of her parliament, and the repeal agitation commenced. But the Roman Catholics having in fact gained a triumph by the abolition of the parliament which consisted of Protestants only, found it impossible then, under new circumstances, to recall a compact to which their own bishops had been parties, even though to them the conditions of it had not been fulfilled. Those statesmen who deemed a national parliament inexpedient when it represented the loyal Protestant minority, were not likely to consent to the restitution of a parliament which



should represent the disaffected Roman Catholic majority. Had they done so, the first step of the restored parliament would probably have been to give an *ad absurdum* demonstration of the impossibility of its continuance by voting for separation from England.

The reasons which we have stated were apparent to the great statesman who was then at the head of the Government. Mr. Pitt expressed his determination to carry the measure, no matter what toil, difficulty, or unpopularity it might entail, so thoroughly was he persuaded that its success depended "the internal tranquillity of Ireland, the interest of the British empire at large, and the happiness of a great portion of the habitable globe." A proof that the toil and difficulty to be encountered would be very great was given by the Irish parliament immediately on the project being opened to it by a royal message. In a House of Commons, where almost every man's price was registered at the Castle, an amendment to omit the paragraph in the address relating to the Union was, notwithstanding, carried by 109 to 105. A meeting of the Irish bar condemned the proposed measure by a majority of five to one. All the talent, all the integrity of the country, was arrayed in opposition, but combined with an unreliable mass of corrupt members. On these the Government set to work, in order to be prepared for the next session, with wholesale bribery. Titles of honour—or rather let us say of dishonour—were the coin in which many members were paid for their votes. Punishments too were added to rewards, and placemen who had voted against the Government were dismissed, as a warning to others; but the extent to which bribery was carried was unexampled, and revealed a baseness in the upper classes of Ireland which happily is, to us, hardly conceivable. It is the saddest passage in the history of an unhappy country—sadder than any possible reverse or calamity that could befall a nation in the path of honour. Lord Cornwallis, the viceroy, did not himself stoop to the meaner kind of corruption, and perhaps was scarcely cognisant of it; but in Viscount Castlereagh was found one who was not troubled with fine scruples; his own letters to Mr. King (see Cornwallis Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 200) can leave no reasonable doubt that he exercised, as Chief Secretary, the functions of a minister of public corruption, and drew large supplies from the secret service fund to purchase the votes of members of parliament. On the other side, when the decisive struggle approached, a fund was raised which, it is said, rose to a hundred thousand pounds, in the futile hope of outbidding the treasury with the boroughmongers, and probably, also, with members themselves. One man was named who was induced by the opposition to vote according to his conscience, for four thousand pounds, an act scarcely so heinous as bribing men to vote contrary to their convictions; but certainly, if true, incapable of justification.

The measure met with but feeble opposition in the English House of Commons, and when it was a second time brought before the Irish House the success of the efforts of Government was evidenced by a majority of forty-two; and this majority was not materially diminished from the introduction to the final passing of the measure. The most remarkable episode in its passage was the affecting scene when Grattan reappeared in the House, from which he had for two years

withdrawn ; a description of it will be found under the memoir of that great Irishman.

On the 2d of August, 1800, the independent legislature of Ireland expired by its own act. The compensation to owners of seats in it amounted to over a million pounds sterling. Henceforth Ireland was to be represented in the Imperial parliament by 4 spiritual peers sitting in rotation, 28 temporal peers, and 100 commoners. Ireland's portion of the revenue was to be in the proportion of two to fifteen for twenty years, and for that period the debts of the two countries were to remain distinct ; freedom of trade was established between them in spite of a protest from the English woollen manufacturers ; the Irish laws and method of election were to remain in force ; and the churches of England and Ireland were united by the compact thus entered into between England on the one side, and the Protestants of Ireland on the other. The Irish Roman Catholics formed a separate compact with the Government, on the strength of which they held aloof from a struggle in which they felt in reality no interest. This compact was, that a Catholic emancipation act should be submitted by the Government to the Imperial Legislature on the accomplishment of the Legislative Union. But Mr. Pitt, in authorizing the Marquis of Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh to make this promise, was reckoning without his sovereign. The King publicly declared that he should consider any man his personal enemy who proposed such a measure. Mr. Pitt's scheme embraced the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy and an adjustment of the tithe question ; but His Majesty having decidedly refused to entertain it, the ministry, or rather Mr. Pitt, resigned. It may well be doubted whether the minister was justified in making such promises without having previously secured the King's consent, knowing the circumstances under which, a few years before, the measure had been brought forward and withdrawn, and the fatal consequences that had on that occasion arisen from the delusive promises of his Government. If he had been in earnest, it is possible that the King's opposition might have been overcome, as it had frequently been before to other measures and by other ministers. But the Roman Catholics were twice duped by Mr. Pitt. He was not sincere in his desire to carry the measure, though in deference to Granville and Castlereagh he brought it forward in the Cabinet ; and on the King's refusal to entertain it, his resignation was a sham, for he continued to hold the helm of Government of which Addington was constituted the figurehead.



## CHAPTER V.

## CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION. 1800—1813.

Disappointed expectations—Resentment of Roman Catholics—Abortive Rising of 1803—Account of the Catholic Disabilities—Their gradual removal—Remnant—Prospect—Petition of 1805—Pitt's Desertion—Pitt bound over—His Death—Tentative Measure—Withdrawn—Attempt to bind over the Granville Ministry—Resignation—State of Ireland—Napoleon and Emancipation—Measure of 1813—Its fate—The Peace—Grounds for shelving Emancipation.

WE commence our historical sketch of Catholic Emancipation from the beginning of the century, for although the actual struggle did not commence until 1805, it will be seen that in the short interval there were circumstances leading up to it. The despair with which the accomplishment of the Union struck its foremost opponents, was not, it must be confessed, wholly unselfish. Generally speaking, they were members of the bar, and it was with a natural mortification they exchanged the halo of the statesman for the horsehair wig of the lawyer. A nobler grief drove Mr. Grattan to the solitude of his retreat on the borders of the county of Wicklow, to mourn over the loss of the independence he had obtained for Ireland. But a greater and truer cause than the defence of a pasteboard parliament was soon to demand the return to public life of those on whom it had apparently been closed. Grattan, Plunket, Ponsonby, and others of less note, had an imperial, instead of a provincial career before them, and were destined to make the English squires, who had humorously deprecated the incursion of a horde of savages from Ireland, taste the steel of Irish eloquence. The violence of faction was exhausted, and a profound lull followed the Act of Union. The promised rewards were being distributed to those whose neutrality or support of the measure it had been necessary to secure. All classes were in expectancy of the advantages which it had been foretold were certain to ensue. The mercantile portion of the community expected to share the prosperity of English traders. The Roman Catholics awaited with confidence the fulfilment of the compact entered into with them. But none, except those who had claims on the Government for place or title, found their expectations realized. The loss of national independence did not at once act as a charm to make the country happy and prosperous. On the contrary, the United Parliament, like a magnet, drew the upper classes over to England—trade began to decline. A poor nation already felt the effect of sharing the taxation of a rich one; the English scale of public expenditure being wholly unsuited to Ireland. And it was not as yet felt that a share in the national glory compensated a full share in the national outlay. The Roman Catholics, as narrated in the last chapter, found that the compact entered into with their leaders by Lords Cornwallis and Castlereagh, on behalf of Mr. Pitt's government, was not to be fulfilled. By the Prime Minister's resignation, however, they were for a time led to believe that the most influential statesman of the day was honestly resolved to stand or fall by their claims, the recognition of which must precede the return to power of one who could not be excluded from it for long. But it soon became apparent that Pitt's fall was only pre-



tended—that, with a view to giving a cheap proof of his good faith, he had feigned overthrow, and had abandoned their measure rather than been unable to carry it. He continued to use the language of a prime minister, speaking from behind the treasury bench, scarcely attempting to conceal that he held the reality of power; and that Mr. Addington (“The Doctor,” as he was called, from being more successful in prescribing a hop-pillow for the King’s sleeplessness, than in his political nostrums) was controlled in his actions, not by his own sinews, but by Mr. Pitt’s strings. The Roman Catholics perceived that they had been duped again; the old resentment awakened, and the embers of rebellion, which had smouldered on from ’98, under the ashes of its almost consumed elements, were again stirred into activity, and supplied with fresh fuel.

We may here briefly touch on the events of 1803, on which a scarcity of food had a great influence. A partial failure of the potato crop produced an increased hatred of England. Nor were there wanting those to take advantage of the prevailing discontent. Colonel Despard, who was breeding his conspiracy in London, sent over an agent; but a more influential plotter was at hand in the person of Robert Emmett, younger and more gifted brother of Thomas Addis. Having spent some years in France he had formed plans for the liberation of Ireland, but a better acquaintance with the country would have shown him the impossibility of their accomplishment. With money bequeathed to him and borrowed, he purchased a supply of arms, prepared magazines of ammunition, and carried on an extensive conspiracy. We do not consider it necessary to enter into details which will be found in the memoir of Emmett. An explosion in one of his stores attracted the attention of the authorities. There was a premature rising, a street riot, a murder or two, and the trial and execution of the leader. Emmett was not guilty of anything unworthy; and we can not help looking back with pain on this last instance of a purely political execution. But to prevent civil war from being lightly undertaken, without sufficient cause, or sufficient chance of success, society must exact a penalty from those who fail in the attempt. Though the abortive insurrection in Dublin was quelled in the course of an hour, the wide-spreading roots of the conspiracy continued in the ground; and this must always be borne in mind in reviewing the struggle for Catholic emancipation, that beneath the surface of events, when most placid in their course, a rebellion slumbered.

We must briefly refer to the penal laws, the disabilities under which Roman Catholics once suffered, and those under which they continued to suffer, before going into the progress of the cause that for a quarter of a century continued to be, in internal politics, the question of the day. The Act of Henry VIII. imposed on all his subjects an oath by which the King’s civil and ecclesiastical supremacy, within the realm, was asserted. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth this Act was modified in its application to religious offices, or those held directly from the crown or connected with justice; so that Roman Catholics were admissible to Parliament, and continued to be so for a hundred and thirty years. An alternative for the oath of supremacy was the declaration denouncing as idolatrous, transubstantiation, invocation of



saints, and the sacrament of the mass; while another alternative was the sacramental test, viz., receiving the holy communion in and according to the use of the English Church. A Roman Catholic had also to disclaim, on oath, a belief that the temporal authority of the Pope extended beyond his own states. The reign of Charles II. brought with it a fresh instalment of intolerant legislation, partly directed against Protestant dissenters, but by necessary implication taking in the adherents of the Roman Church. The Corporation Act (13th Charles II.) was an instance of the latter; it was framed to exclude from offices in cities and corporations Cromwellians suspected of disloyalty; and the oath contained a clause not to take up arms against the king or those lawfully commissioned by him. This was repealed, (and it was quite time it should be), in the reign of William and Mary. The Test Act, (25th Charles II.), the product of Lord Shaftesbury, and levelled against the Duke of York, excluded Roman Catholics from all offices, civil or military. It was not repealed at the revolution, because the exiled house still impended over the country, and it did duty for a bill of exclusion. By the articles of the treaty of Limerick, it is true, the acts enumerated were done away. But did the power of repealing the laws of England rest with the Earl of Athlone? We before noticed that the military authorities made their treaty, and only could make it dependently on the assent of Parliament, which assent was withheld. Parliament exercised its undoubted right; and to call Limerick "the City of the Violated Treaty," involves an oversight of the contingent nature of the treaty, from which it derives that appellation. On the other hand, however, it must be allowed that Parliament recognised a moral obligation, which perhaps there was no need to have admitted. In one sense it sanctioned the articles of Limerick, but not in the sense in which they were entered into between the military commanders. It ratified them so far as concerned the garrison of Limerick; its remnants were no longer to be debarred from the professions of law or physic; a concession to them not of much value, as they could never more set foot in Ireland. No direct violation of the treaty would have been so contemptible as was this trick. Under the Mutiny and Admiralty laws Roman Catholic soldiers and sailors might be compelled to attend Protestant worship. Roman Catholics could not hold landed property; and it was only by the fidelity of Protestant neighbours, in whose names it was held, that they continued to do so. A poor Protestant barber is said to have held at one time a great portion of the Roman Catholic property in the south of Ireland. It speaks well for both parties that this kind of trust was never broken. The Roman Catholic could not educate his children at home; it was equally unlawful to send them to be educated abroad; he could not, at his death, appoint guardians or bequeath his estates to them; nor could he add to his property by purchase. Intermarriage with Protestants was forbidden by law, and many a romantic story might be told of the consequences of this enactment. The good feelings of neighbours prevented the laws from being rigorously carried out; but they had sufficient force to achieve their object, which was, to break down the Roman Catholic gentry and vest the ownership of the land in

Protestants, almost exclusively. One unfortunate effect of such policy is the alienation which this sharp religious division has caused in Ireland between landlord and tenant.

In the latter half of the 18th century the condition of the Roman Catholics was gradually undergoing amelioration. The burden of their chains was lightened; from time to time a fetter was struck off. In 1774 an oath was substituted not involving the renunciation of their religious belief. In 1778 they were permitted to take leases for the longest term known to law, to inherit estates, and to dispose of them by will, or otherwise. In 1782 it was made lawful for them to purchase estates; some educational disabilities were removed; they were no longer compelled to declare on oath when and by whom they had heard mass celebrated; they were not henceforth required to make good malicious injury and depredations; their horses were not to be regarded as lawful plunder; they were permitted to reside in those cities from which they had previously been excluded; they might appoint guardians to their children, and worship God as their fathers worshipped him. In 1793 they were admitted to the elective franchise on the basis of a forty shilling freehold suffrage; they were allowed to practise as attorneys and barristers; education was relieved from all legal restraint, and intermarriage with Protestants was legalized. But they were still excluded from the honours of the State, though admitted to substantial power. The doors of parliament were closed upon them. They had no part in making the laws which they were required to obey. All State employment, all State honours, they saw monopolized by the Protestant minority. This had the worst effect on both parties—inflaming the Roman Catholic with jealousy, and the Protestant with arrogance towards, and suspicion of, the excluded multitude. Nothing could have been more unwise than to release them from their chains while they were still compelled to wear the badge of political servitude. The full weight of the penal laws did not excite so much resentment as their last remnants. As Lord Plunket said in 1813, “the time to have paused was before we heaved from those sons of earth the mountains which the wisdom or the terrors of our ancestors heaped upon them.” Their exclusion from full privileges, politically unwise, could not be sustained on religious grounds—for in 1774 the renunciation of the doctrines of Rome was changed into a renunciation of the political opinions supposed to be derived from them. The oath substituted contained a denial of the Pope’s temporal authority in these realms, and an abjuration of all interference with the Protestant establishment and hierarchy. We have learned from the course of events the inefficiency of all oaths to bind political action, and the consequent folly of imposing them. For while they form no real safeguard, their repeal is a favourable mode of approaching to the assault of those institutions of which they were framed to be the protection. The soundness of our institutions is a better protection than oaths, which convey an implication of unsoundness, and are only provocative of attack. Nor can we pretend to bind posterity to think as we do. To-morrow must take thought for the things of itself.

The year 1805 marks the decided commencement of the struggle



for Catholic emancipation. Many vicissitudes did it undergo, fluctuating with the fortunes of the great war—very close when invasion was imminent—very distant when the danger passed away. Now the obstacle was the obstinacy and honourable scruples of George III.; now the faithlessness of George IV. to the party which had upheld him through evil report—now it was the great peace, which almost dispelled the question for eight years—now a scandal in the highest life preoccupied public attention—now the insurrectionary aspect of Ireland made it too dangerous to run the chance of a fresh defeat—now the violence of agitation indisposed statesmen to action—now a liberal parliament was expiring—now a new parliament was returned with a majority against the Catholic claims. The House of Lords, encouraged by the King on one side, and the indifference of the English populace on the other, as often as the measure for Catholic relief was passed by the Commons, rejected it with an emphatic majority; until at last King and Ministers, startled by the extraordinary aspect of affairs in Ireland, gave their Lordships the cue to pass the measure. Such, in brief, is the history of the struggle for Catholic Emancipation, the outline of which we must now fill in with the particulars, reaching from 1805 to 1829.

Mr. Pitt having replaced his *locum tenens*, Mr. Addington, in 1804, the Roman Catholics had an opportunity of testing whether he was disposed to do more in support of their claims, than remaining, as he had already done, out of office for two years. O'Connell, now beginning to take a leading part among the Catholics of Dublin, got up a petition, which was most numerous signed, and Mr. Pitt was requested to present it. His pledge to the Catholics and his pledge to the King being quite irreconcilable, he chose to adhere to the latter, and refused to present the petition; the ground of his refusal being very illustrative of his general rule of action, that he regarded the question as one, not of justice, but of policy, and so it was handed over to Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox; and the cause of emancipation received its first decisive parliamentary defeat when the motion founded on this petition was lost by a majority of 212. In 1806 the death of the minister whom George III. had bound over to keep the peace upon this subject, under a penalty which he was not likely again to incur—of losing office—and whose place in the national confidence had been unassailable whilst he lived—led to an administration being formed by Grenville and Howick, the friends of the Roman Catholic cause. It was resolved to introduce a tentative measure, and such as would enlist a certain amount of Protestant sympathy. Accordingly a bill was brought in to open the higher ranks of the army to Catholics and Dissenters. The violent opposition of Mr. Perceval caused this bill to be withdrawn; and the King, who thought that, having thus done their *devoirs*, and given their friends a proof of sincere zeal for their cause, but inability to forward it, Ministers would consent to be bound over like their predecessors, endeavoured to impose upon them a pledge not to raise the question further. This was, of course, refused, and the Ministry resigned; Lord Liverpool formed an administration, and dissolved on the "no popery" cry—the country returned him a majority—and Catholic Emancipation became henceforth,

until its last stage, an opposition question. It is not to be wondered at that such alternations caused a dangerous excitement in Ireland. Politics were little understood among the peasantry, who seldom or never saw a newspaper, and, had newspapers been as common as now, could not have read them. The rumours that supplied the place of printed news, of course presented the wildest mirage images of what was actually taking place in England, and their expectations, in the commencement of the year, raised to the highest pitch, were, before it closed, completely extinguished. No conception of the passions they were playing with seems to have disturbed English Statesmen in their game of politics—though it did become occasionally necessary (as in 1807) to ask for a continuation of the Habeas Corpus Suspension, or a renewal of the Insurrection Act. The effect of refusing the Irish Roman Catholics one class of liberties was counteracted by depriving them of all the rest—a system of government so effectual in Ireland that Irishmen wonder it has never been tried in England, to still popular clamour. Meanwhile the mild contests in parliament cast a fearful reflection over Ireland; Protestants and Catholics became more furiously exasperated against each other; O'Connell presided over a great system of agitation in Dublin, and the Catholic Association was able to elude all the ingenuity of the lawyers in framing acts to put it down, by changes of title, method of procedure, and nominal objects. On the Continent the power of Napoleon was absorbing everything—the French Empire assuming gigantic proportions, only paralleled by the empires of antiquity. The position of England became extremely anxious; the discontents of five millions of her subjects were not unworthy of consideration in the face of so great a danger. And the majority against Catholic relief dwindled every year. True, the Prince's retention of Mr. Perceval in 1811, when he assumed the unrestricted regency, was a sore disappointment to those who had long expected from the son a reversal of the father's policy—for Mr. Perceval was, of all the great statesmen who took sides on this question, the most firmly and conscientiously opposed to concession. His assassination in 1812 removed a dangerous and honourable opponent. The following year Mr. Grattan moved for a Committee of the whole House, to inquire into the laws affecting Roman Catholics. The motion was carried by a majority of forty, and a bill was introduced which was the foundation of that of 1829. It was read a third time, and struggled on into Committee; but being there decapitated of its principal provision, the admission of Roman Catholics to parliament, was indignantly withdrawn by the Opposition. Napoleon fell in 1814; the danger which had threatened England for so long a period passed away; Irish discontents lost their consequence; and for eight years the claims of the Roman Catholics, though they continued to be urged, attracted little notice.

We may briefly summarise the grounds on which English statesmen resolved to put Roman Catholic Emancipation aside, the moment it appeared perfectly safe to do so, although they had wavered in their opposition under the influence of dangers from without. The various attempts which Ireland had made to secede from the Empire had been the cause of the exclusion of the Roman Catholics from political power,



as well as of their other disabilities. When the nonpolitical restrictions were removed, they were not considered sufficiently reconciled to the British connection to entrust them with a share of power in the State proportionate to their numbers and wealth—nothing less could be offered. The policy was very much that which the North adopted to the South, on the conclusion of the American civil war. It was considered that it would be the weakness of generosity to readmit them to positions where they might conspire again to overthrow the Union, which it had cost so much blood and treasure to preserve. The argument for the exclusion of the Irish Roman Catholics was exactly the same as that for the exclusion of the Southern rebels. And the monopoly of government by the English Protestant colonists was only a little more complete than that bestowed on the “loyal whites.” The connection of the Roman Catholic religion with the history of the Empire; the forcible transfer of its possessions to the Protestant Church—the natural sympathy of the Irish, owing to identity of religion, with foreign Roman Catholic nations—their recognition of the external authority of the Pope, who might, to gratify, for instance, the Emperor of the French, order his obedient children in Ireland to obstruct the British Government by every means in their power, to refuse to serve in the army, or even raise a rebellion—all these apprehensions disposed English Statesmen against the admission of Roman Catholics to political power. It was believed that to admit them to parliament would endanger not only the Union but the Established Church. Grattan considered it necessary to insert in the preamble of his bill of 1813 a clause securing the Church. The Legislature itself, it was feared, would lose its Protestant character, and the Constitution be reduced to a neutral tint. It was assumed to be apparent that the first consequence of Emancipation would be the Roman Catholic Church assuming a new relation to the State—and the very uncertainty as to what would be the nature of this change indisposed statesmen to risk adopting that measure which would bring it about. Nor was the admission of Roman Catholics to high offices of trust, which would necessarily follow, considered safe or politic; while, if the Government was to retain its Protestant character, it was far better that it should do so by the operation of the law, than by the exercise of a discretionary power.\* Some of the apprehensions entertained we can now see were visionary, as, for instance, that the foreign policy of the country would be affected by the number of Roman Catholics admitted—or that Roman Catholics in positions of trust would be disloyal—others which were the most emphatically repudiated have been verified by time. A long and harassing struggle for a repeal of the Union commenced on the passing of Catholic Emancipation. It is still the dream of those nationalists who will accept any abatement upon complete independence; and it is impossible to say that we may not awaken one day to see it in some shape realized. Above all, in respect of the dangers which it was said would arise from the measure to the Established Church—the fears expressed by

\* See Memoirs and Correspondence of the late Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, by Lord Mahon.

Conservative and combated by Liberal statesmen — have been most amply verified. Strong declarations were made—perish the Roman Catholic claims if they involved this consequence!—the Act of Union itself would be invalidated if the Church were overthrown from its pedestal of state. It was denied that the Irish Catholics would *wish* for such an event—it was faithfully promised that they never would promote it. Those promises and protestations were made in perfect good faith; but how vain it is to enter into recognizances for the good behaviour of those who will come after us? It is rash to promise, even for ourselves, but the height of absurdity to promise for our successors. Let us, however, say for those who promised, or rather prophesied—for such promises are but prophecies—that emancipation would not endanger the Irish Church, that they were speaking on the assumption of the endowment of the Roman Catholic priesthood being associated with the measure of relief. But whatever the consequences foreseen, and however certain they were to follow, statesmen ought to have considered if it was likely that five millions of people, rapidly increasing in wealth and importance, could be excluded from political privileges *permanently*—for if it was not, it was folly to make their ultimate admission more dangerous by keeping them out to the last moment. It would have been wiser—their final entrance being inevitable—to have admitted them graciously than to have forced them to break open the door. When they did enter the Constitution, they entered it as implacable enemies, determined to push their opposition to the utmost point.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.—1813—1829.

Eight eventless years—1821—Dr. Milner's Petition—Veto—Measures pass in Commons—Rejected in Lords—Permanent effects on Ireland—The King's Visit—Mixed Government—Delay—Defence of Peasantry by Catholic Association—Enormous growth of this body—Unlawful Societies Act—Sir F. Burdett's Bills—Thrown out by Lords—Vicissitudes—Catholic Association in the year '28—Clare Election—Relation of Landlord and Tenant—Effects of the Election—Danger of an outbreak—King's Speech—Wellington and Peel introduce measure—Wings—The End.

THE period on which we are now entering divides itself into two equal portions—the first, eventless, of enforced artificial quiet, like a drugged sleep; the second, a term of delirious violence. Eight years, as we have said, passed away before the question came to a crisis again. Owing to the iron rule of Mr. Saurin, Attorney-General, the agitation was kept within bounds, and the exasperation of the people, confined below the surface, grew more intense in proportion to the success of the Government in denying it expression. A harmless irruption was, by this means, being turned into a dangerous disease. In England, however, the forced quiescence of the Irish agitators had a favourable effect on the public mind; and in 1819 the majority against the Catholic claims was but two. In the Lords, also, the majority had diminished. It was in the following year that Ireland lost its greatest



man and Catholic Emancipation its foremost champion—Henry Grattan. One cannot but regret that he was not spared, “coming into the temple” of English freedom, to see the fulfilment of his hopes; but nine years were yet to elapse ere the battle which he had so often led should at last result in victory. The year 1820 passed without any action being taken, the public attention being occupied by the Queen’s trial; but in 1821 a great effort was resolved on, and numerous influential petitions were presented, to prepare the ground in parliament for the reception of the measure; but we may observe that a petition was presented from a small section of bigoted English Roman Catholics *against* the Bill, and that it was headed by the Most Reverend Dr. Milner, who, on this question, separated from all his brethren of the English Catholic Episcopate. This prelate’s ground of opposition was the lamentable union that would be sure to ensue between Catholics and Protestants, to the grievous peril of the former from a close contact with heresy. Alas, that his fears of such intimate union should have proved wholly visionary! Dr. Milner was the one who was most opposed to giving to the Crown a veto in the election of Roman Catholic bishops, and this being involved in one of the two Bills now about to be laid before Parliament, was a more presentable ground of objection than the harmony likely to be produced. The point had long previously caused a split in the Roman Catholic party—the upper and moderate section being in favour of conceding the check, and the more violent, led by Mr. O’Connell, indignantly opposed to it. In every country the sovereign has such a power—Prussia affording an instance of the veto being vested in a Protestant monarch. And if the Roman Catholic bishops and their clergy were to be recognised and paid by the State, it certainly seemed only fair that the State, if such an inconvenient and even dangerous right were thought worth contending for, should in its turn be recognised by the Catholic Church, and receive this concession for what it gave. This, in our opinion, mischievous right of meddling in the ecclesiastical polity of the Roman Catholic Church, would, we may hope, never have been exercised by any Minister on behalf of the English crown. But no doubt it would have been painful to the feelings of Roman Catholics that a Protestant Government should, even nominally, have any concern in their religious government, and, so far, the right of veto was perhaps felt to be a set-off to the high Protestant party, for the regrets they, on their part, would experience in being obliged to let the Roman Catholics go. Greatly to the astonishment and mortification of the extreme Catholic party in Ireland, the Pope commissioned his Legate, Monsignor Quarantotti, to express his wish that the veto should be conceded; and, accordingly, one of the measures of 1821 was a Bill to regulate the intercourse of the Roman Catholic clergy with the See of Rome,—this being separated from the Relief Bill to avoid the appearance of a bargain. Mr. Plunket, who, in succession to Mr. Grattan, had assumed the management of the cause, explained that for the same reason a State provision for the Roman clergy was not mixed up with the measures he was introducing. After one of the great debates of English Parliamentary history—in which the arguments and invectives of the leaders resembled, in weight and force of impulsion, the missiles of Homeric heroes—

the first reading was carried by a majority of six, and the second reading by eleven. Lord Donoughmore had charge of the Bills in the Upper House, and received the support of Lords Grenville, Grey, and Lansdowne, while Lord Liverpool led the Opposition. Their lordships took the course they usually adopt with measures in which the concurrence of the House of Commons has been heartless and insincere. They threw them out on the second reading by a considerable majority. The theory of this practice may be correct—that the nation should prove itself really anxious for a change before a change is sanctioned—but in the case of the Catholic claims a further delay of eight years, resulting from the defeat of 1821, had a most disastrous effect upon Ireland. The previous eight years' delay had been injurious enough, but the eight years which followed put the country almost past cure. When its day came, the measure of 1829 was wholly insufficient. A slight indisposition, which has been allowed to advance to a fever, may at that stage be aggravated by the remedy which would have removed it at first. Without pronouncing on its original justice, we have stated how the demand grew; how the concession was offered before the demand for it had been well made; how it was put forward as the basis of a compact that was broken; how it was again and again held out and withdrawn. At last the Irish Roman Catholics were worked into a fury which nothing could appease; they were given a taste for agitation and a habit of looking to constitutional or revolutionary change for an improvement of their condition instead of to their own exertions, which we can scarcely conceive their ever losing. When all that it is possible to concede to them shall have been conceded—when we shall have gone as far as any English statesman would dare to go on the road of confiscation—when we have given them government according to their own notions, and sacrificed to their prejudices every institution, no matter how beneficial, that caused them offence—we fear they will go on asking for what is impossible, carrying on that eternal agitation which we taught them and obliged them to learn, and still frightening by their rude gestures those timid flocks of capitalists who long have hovered about their shores, afraid to alight, and preferring to the temptations which the immense capabilities of Ireland hold out a flight to the most distant countries of the globe. Nothing is so difficult to eradicate as the tribe of agitators when once it is established in a country; to them peaceful settlement of a question is detestable, and they endeavour to stave it off by increasing their demands, and refusing to admit of any reasonable concession. Thus, when the measures of 1821 passed through the Lower House, and this unprecedented degree of success was regarded by the sanguine as insuring their becoming law that session, a furious agitation was instantly set on foot against the so-called "Securities." Meetings were held all over Ireland to denounce them; but the news that the Bills had been lost in the House of Lords changed the indignation into which the people had been lashed into bitter disappointment. They discovered that a measure with drawbacks was preferable to none; but the agitators experienced intense relief.

As a counteraction to the bad effects of the shipwreck of Catholic emancipation on the ice-bound shore of the House of Lords—where



so many goodly vessels are lost—George IV. favoured Ireland with a visit in 1821. We cannot digress into the particulars of that visit; suffice it to say that it was like a burst of the brightest sunshine on the darkest of days. It was indeed a great and impressive event. O'Connell, the incarnation of popular discontent, whose tremendous agitation was yet to overcome the opposition of this very sovereign, and to bend the will of the English House of Peers, and win for himself from the Irish people the affectionate appellation of the Liberator, knelt to the king as he left Kingstown, and presented him in the name of Ireland with a laurel crown, representing the sovereignty he had won over the hearts of the people. George had shewn many marks of favour to the Roman Catholics during his short visit, and, going away, he charged his Irish subjects to forget sectarian rancour. This inspired the Catholics with hope, but it was a false hope. Of the animosities he exhorted them to lay aside he did not remove the cause; he bid the wound to heal while he left in it the sword of the penal laws. Ireland soon, again, became filled with disaffection. The transitory good effects of the first visit passed away—the brief hour of sunshine was succeeded by a settled gloom. Those who had the government of Ireland were kept in continual uneasiness; the ground trembled with the earthquakes of rebellion which threatened at any moment to spread ruin over the surface of society. Mr. Peel having at this time joined Lord Liverpool's cabinet as Home Secretary, the Grenville Whigs were also invited to assist in the Government, and, at the advice of Lord Grenville, who did not accept the offer for himself, Wellesley and Plunket became respectively Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and Attorney-General. The latter appointment particularly was thought a good omen for the Catholic cause; but Mr. Goulburn was sent as Chief Secretary to restore equilibrium. The King sanctioned this infusion of Whigs, while he took care that they should be well counteracted, for he loved to set off party against party, and play for the political "stalemate." In 1822 Ireland was in such an uneasy state that it was felt bringing forward the measure when it was certain to be defeated again, might be attended with dangerous consequences. O'Connell sanguinely believed that it could not be defeated: "Parliament would not be mad enough," he wrote. Cooler heads thought otherwise. Not simply those who were in office, and might have been suspected of deferring the question on that account, but Lord Grenville, who, as we have said, refused to join the Cabinet, advised inaction for the present. Besides, the agitation against the Securities that had betrayed itself when it was thought the measure was about to pass in the preceding year, showed that some clear understanding should be come to on that head before it was again undertaken. Lord Grenville, though he declared himself willing to support the measure without securities, thought their omission would retard it by very many years; but lest while this point was being debated the cause should fall into other and objectionable hands, he recommended that Plunket should give notice of it for the following year. He also thought that Canning's Bill to admit Roman Catholic Peers to the Upper House would, by itself, be certain to pass, and that having passed, it would leave an opening for a larger measure to follow. The party followed the advice of the Whig Chief—but Lord

Wellesley and Mr. Plunket continued in their administration of Irish affairs, and in the face of great difficulties, to pursue a conciliatory policy. This gave great offence to the Orange party, who manifested their resentment by throwing whisky bottles at the Viceroy's head on his attending a performance at the theatre. In the years 1823 and 1824, a rebellion was felt to be at any moment a possible contingency;—"the whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint." In May, of the former year, O'Connell and Sheil issued a manifesto, reviving the Catholic Association on an immense scale; to take in, not merely the leaders of the people, but the people themselves. At this time the peasantry of Tipperary, largely descended from Cromwell's troopers, had already won an evil fame for their county;—many outrages had been committed upon the tithe proctors, who were oppressors of the people, and plunderers of the clergy—and the new Association undertook the defence of those charged with offences, provoked by laws of which the Roman Catholics complained. Nobility, prelates, and gentry joined in their defence; the people were deeply moved—and the enthusiasm which this identification of the rich with the wrongs of the poor excited in the Catholic portions of the nation, united it together as one man. Crime and violence completely ceased—the people had confidence in their leaders; and felt that they might safely leave their wrongs in such hands, and would be certain of redress. To meet the expenses of the Association subscriptions flowed in from all quarters; the "Catholic Rent" was established, and averaged £500 a-week,—“Church-wardens,” as they were called, being appointed to collect it in every parish throughout Ireland. Startled by this immense organization, which might, if allowed to develop its strength, be used for objects not yet declared—even the habitual supporters of the Catholic cause agreed that the Association should be suppressed by an Act of Parliament—but they stipulated that the Act suppressing it should have for its consort a Catholic Relief Bill. The Unlawful Societies Act passed into law—but the Relief Bill did not. The latter was introduced by Sir Francis Burdett, with two other Acts, known as “the wings,” for the abolition of forty shilling freeholders, and the State payment of the Roman Catholic clergy. Sir F. Burdett's Bill was carried in the Commons by the largest majority yet obtained—viz., twenty-one;—but, as usual, it was rejected by the Peers with great emphasis. The Duke of York (heir-apparent to the Crown) had the rashness to declare that “whatever might be his situation in life” he would adhere to his opposition to the Catholic claims; and although it was quite unconstitutional for a royal prince so to express himself, the King, by public marks of favour, showed that he approved the declaration. The more dark and hopeless the parliamentary prospect, the brighter, of course, burned the agitation out of doors. Meetings of the Association filled the country; the Act lately passed to suppress it only caused a modification of its name; and it was declared to be embodied for purposes “not contrary to the statute.” The workings of the people were thus becoming more violent and concerted: but we must now hasten on to the culmination, dismissing in a few words events in themselves of great apparent importance, but lost in the interest of the approaching crisis, in the bringing about of which they had little or no



part. In the expiring parliament of 1826, which had thrice pronounced for emancipation, the question was not again raised;—in the new parliament there was a majority *against* it of four votes, but, shortly after, a motion was carried for a committee to inquire into the laws relating to Roman Catholics, in which the House of Lords did not, however, concur. In the meantime Lord Liverpool had been succeeded by Canning; Canning by Goderich; Goderich by the Duke of Wellington, who, on the secession of the Canningites, was left at the head of a pure Tory government. Not, however, to these changes, nor to the ordinary and wearying vicissitudes to which the cause was subjected in parliament, was the victory attributable which was now close at hand; though still, to professional politicians, it was as much as ever one of the political counters, of no value in themselves, but with which the game of politics is played. It was in Ireland itself that events were about to take place which even professed politicians could no longer trifle with. The year 1828 came—the point marked on the dial of time when resistance should cease, as if by magic—as if it had never been: while the undying hatred—the violence of the agitator—the consciousness of power in the people, should continue as if the opposition had never ceased. In the month of January 1828, on the same day and at the same hour, the whole Roman Catholic population of Ireland met in their churches, to make a last solemn demand, before God, for equal rights. The movement was but one step from revolution; and it became evident that the question now lay between re-enacting the penal laws, or granting the demands of the people. The attention of foreign nations was attracted; contributions in money and addresses of sympathy flowed in from France, Belgium, Italy, and America. It was then that a step was resolved upon, by which the question between the people and their rulers should be put to a practical issue, viz., the election of a Roman Catholic to serve in parliament, and Mr. O'Connell was nominated for a vacancy which had occurred in the representation of the county of Clare. His opponent was Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, a popular and even liberal country gentleman, who had just been nominated to the Presidency of the Board of Trade, and was obliged to seek re-election. Money was abundantly subscribed; the Association sent forth its lecturers; the Roman Catholic clergy were called upon to put out all their influence; their churches in the county of Clare were used for the time more for political meetings than for religious worship—and at all hours of the night and day the priests, with their rugged eloquence stirred up the people to the approaching contest. The convictions of the Roman Catholic voters, of course, did not require to be deepened; the task was to raise their courage up to the point of voting in opposition to the will of their landlords. The landlords, on the other hand, who were unanimously in favour of Mr. Fitzgerald, held a meeting to express their indignation at this revolt. They truly said that it would change the relation between landlord and tenant—that it would result in a disunion which would be bad for both parties—the old feudal tie would be broken—a commercial relationship would take its place. This was indeed the marked beginning of such a change—the people withdrew from the landlords their feudal fealty, but they have never since been able to understand or excuse the

landlords withdrawing from them the consideration and indulgence of feudal lords.

To this day the Irish peasant's notion of what a landlord ought to be answers exactly to the position which was formerly held by their native chiefs; they have never given in their adherence from the most remote times down to the present to the kind of ownership of the soil which exists in England; and the landlords themselves having generally acted on this theory, were not unfairly indignant that the people should repudiate their side of the tacit compact. When, therefore, we see statements of one class of writers, that the people had hitherto been in slavery to their landlords, we must remember that the obedience they rendered was of a respectful and even affectionate kind—hallowed by tradition, and rewarded by an indulgence peculiar to the country. On the other hand, when the domination of their priests proved to be stronger than that of the landlords, and the people followed their spiritual guides in preference, this is absurdly described as being “enslaved by the priesthood;” whereas the Roman Catholic clergy only gave them courage to follow their convictions, or, rather, beat out one fear by another—the fear of man by the fear of God. Nothing is to be gained by the exchange of passionate language; while there was much reason for the indignation of the landlords, there was also much reason why the people should on this particular question vote against them, and much reason why the priests should stimulate them to do so. What Mr. Fitzgerald and his supporters failed to see, but such men as Mr. Peel and Lord Ellenborough did see, was the real object of this attempt—that it was not to turn out a supporter of Catholic emancipation because he was a Protestant, or even because he had joined the Tory Government when the Whig section left it, but to bring about a constitutional deadlock—to illustrate the paradox of shutting out from sitting in parliament those who could be represented in it—putting the temple above the maker of it. This was the object of the effort—this was what gave it such great importance—this was what made its excuse—and we can only wonder, in looking back, that the experiment was not sooner tried. The contest excited extraordinary interest in political circles; it was felt that, according to the practice of ancient warfare, the fate of a people was about to be set upon a single combat—the combatants being the mighty champion of the Catholics on one side, and as good a representative as could be found of Protestant landlordism on the other. Mr. O’Connell was blessed by Bishop Doyle ere he left Dublin; his journey to Clare resembled a royal progress; into every town on the route his carriage was drawn by multitudes, under green triumphal arches; and at last, when he approached Ennis, the county town of Clare, he was met by thirty thousand people, who welcomed the man who had come to fight their battle, with unbounded enthusiasm. It was in vain that Mr. Fitzgerald pleaded on the hustings his fidelity to the Catholic cause, pleaded the example of Plunket and others, in joining a ministry opposed to that cause, and the advantage of leavening its opposition,—in vain he menaced the tenant that in the day of sickness, of arrear of rent, when his family should be famishing, he would regret his alienation from the landlord, when the orators of the Association should be far away. In vain the landlords, in some cases, led their



tenants to the poll, for there the priests tore them from their leaders, and compelled them to vote, as they termed it, "for God and O'Connell." On the third day of the polling Mr. Fitzgerald retired from the hopeless contest. To the great honour of the landlords he it said, they did not carry out the menaces, disguised as fears of what would be likely to happen, in the hustings speech of their candidate—but the Catholic Association guarded against the possibility by collecting money to pay by loan the arrears of any tenant who might be threatened with eviction. The success they had achieved in Clare made them resolve to extend the experiment, and at the next election to oust all the county members who would not pledge themselves to civil and religious equality, parliamentary reform, the repeal of the Subletting Act of 1828, and opposition to the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, unless in the unlikely event of those two great pillars of Protestantism letting fall the cause of which they were the trusted supporters. This resolve effected the conversion of all the Irish county members who had hitherto opposed the "Catholic claims;" and Mr. Dawson, brother-in-law of Mr. Peel, and supposed to reflect his sentiments, known to be the most thorough going of his party, declared on one of the orange holy-days, the festival of the Relief of Derry, at a banquet in the town of Derry itself, that he saw the impossibility of holding out any longer, and would henceforth withdraw his opposition to Catholic Relief. Well might the statue of the Reverend George Walker on the walls of Derry, according to the legend quoted by Mr. Plunket in his Memoir of his Grandfather, which places the event, however, somewhat later, let fall his sword at such words as these. The difficulty of the Catholic Association now became to moderate the tremendous agitation they had originated, and to keep the Roman Catholic population of Ireland on the verge of rebellion without allowing it to fall over. To have done so would have been to lose their cause. Already the organization had begun to assume a military appearance—there was a marching over the country of large bodies of men, sometimes in uniform, but generally without arms. Mr. Lawless declared he would march with an unarmed Catholic army through the Protestant strongholds of the north; this promise he endeavoured to fulfil, and in the course of his progress he mustered from twenty-five to thirty thousand men; but, in several places where the Protestants were prepared to dispute his progress, he wisely turned aside. The movement resembled one of those upheavings of the people in the middle ages, which, however, were less dangerous, because they had not eyes—were without a fixed purpose. In Tipperary Mr. O'Connell was obliged to call on the people to give up their meetings, which were becoming openly seditious, and he was implicitly obeyed. A still greater proof of the power which the leaders of the Association had acquired over the people, was their being able to induce them to cease their senseless but immemorial faction fights, and to be one people. No nation was ever before brought under such complete discipline, and it is difficult to explain, if there was not a previous intention on the part of Ministers to grant emancipation when they had a good excuse for doing so, or were lying in wait for open insurrection, in which there would be an utter end of it, why they allowed the Association to attain to such enormous power. But never were Ministers

more incapable of such baseness than Wellington and Peel. The fact is, when they formed a Ministry (at first a compound one), it was too late to touch the Association without immediately causing a rebellion. Lord Goderich's government was too weak and disintegrated: in Mr. Canning's time the Association was quiet; before that it was embryo. Thus it was allowed to reach its full growth; at last, when the Government procured the Act for its suppression, they were afraid to use it; and it suppressed nothing but the Orange lodges. The Act having expired in July 1828, the Orangemen again assembled—the Brunswick clubs were formed, and a Protestant Rent was levied. The masses of the opposing creeds approached each other like thunder clouds, menacing the country with the bursting out of a storm of civil war. The life-long opponents of Catholic Emancipation were converted by the terrible aspect of Irish affairs. The King advised the passing of a measure in his speech at the opening of Parliament. The Duke of Wellington declared that he, the constant opponent of it hitherto, now introduced it to save his country from civil war, of which he had witnessed the horrors. The Bill passed both Houses (the Lords with a majority of 104 on the second reading), and received the Royal sanction. It has made the year 1829 one of the memorable dates in English history. Catholic emancipation may, as was said of another measure, have entered the walls of the Constitution through the breach made by its defenders themselves, filled with the armed foes of all within—but no matter how it may fulfil the predictions of its opponents, we cannot regret the passing of the measure. We may find deplorable consequences as we proceed, but what would have happened if it had been withheld? Political exclusion on account of religious opinions is a form of persecution which the civilized world has abjured, with the exception of the one ecclesiastical power. Shame would it be if England alone were to retain that old fashion.

The Bill came in on wings, like Sir Francis Burdett's—one the same, the abolition of the 40s. freeholders—the other (very different from the payment of the Catholic clergy), prohibiting the importation of Jesuits. This was, like the matador's cloak, thrown to the horns of intolerance—it gave bigotry somewhat to gratify its rage, without any one being hurt by it. Such acts, even when seriously intended, being contrary to the genius of the nation, are never acted on in England. We have too much respect for our own liberties, to set the precedent of seriously meddling with those of others. It was necessary to do something to quiet that violent ferment of "no popery" feeling, which frothed into nine hundred and fifty-seven petitions in five days. By the main Bill the Roman Catholics were admitted to Parliament, being required to take only the oath of allegiance, which involved part of the old oath of supremacy, and made admissible to all offices except a few legal ones, which have since been thrown open—even the Irish Chancellorship, at last. There is now only one place a Roman Catholic cannot climb to,—the majority of the nation being Protestant—the throne.\*

\* Mr. Herbert, M.P., of Muckcross, had the good fortune to light on one remaining disability, in the year 1868—viz., the exclusion of Roman Catholics from the Guards—Sir John Packington promised that the order should be rescinded.



## CHAPTER VII.

TITHE COMMUTATION AND CONTEMPORARY MEASURES.—1829—1840.

Emancipation proves no remedy—Tithe Question taken up in its stead—Intense poverty makes tithes oppressive—Brief retrospect—Fall of the Tories—Commencement of "The Tithe War"—Its progress—Reports of Committees—Mr. Stanley's three Bills—Reform, English and Irish—Unsuccessful attempts to settle the Tithe Question—Appropriation clause—National Education—Resolutions of 1838—The Bill that passed—Municipal Corporation Act—Workhouses.

A CAUSE which we shall have to dwell on more at large in another chapter, viz., the enormous increase of population, made it impossible that there could be peace and contentment in Ireland. Catholic Emancipation could not counteract the uneasiness produced by increasing poverty; a country always on the verge of a famine could not be at rest. It has been truly said that freedom is not a great blessing to a beggar; and to this extremity the bulk of the population was reduced in Ireland. One thing the Catholic question had done, it concentrated the attention of the people—it gave a dramatic unity to their history, which it now lost for a time. But its settlement did nothing to cure the disease from which the country was suffering; on the contrary, it released the attention of the people to become more sensible of their misery; they were disappointed by their success; it did not make them happier. In England the recent performance of a great act of justice made it impossible to get anything more done for Ireland. Irish affairs still caused uneasiness to statesmen, but more because they affected the stability of ministries than from their own importance. Mr. Plunket had foretold, in 1821, that the waves would not immediately subside when the storm of agitation should cease; and after eight years more of it they were still less likely to do so. The whole nation in the meantime had been educated to politics, and the landlords had been, politically, deposed by the priesthood. By defending an untenable position for many years, the party of resistance had thrown a great victory into the hands of Mr. O'Connell and his followers, and it was not at all surprising, or, indeed, unjustifiable, that they should follow it up with what has since resembled a pursuit rather than an advance. At the Clare election Mr. O'Connell had sketched out the programme of agitation. It included Reform, Abolition of Tithes, Repeal of the Subletting Act, and, as the grand impossibility—which it is always well to have in reserve—Repeal of the Union. With this considerable stock-in-trade, the Catholic Relief Bill of 1829 by no means produced the hoped-for bankruptcy of Irish agitators.

The most continuous and defined thread in the history of the following nine years was the Tithe Question, and what accounts for this is, that it was also the least artificial subject of popular discontent. From the increase of population the people were rapidly growing poorer, and consequently more sensitively alive to any burden, however trifling. A slight potato failure, like that which occurred at the

beginning of the century, a premonition of the great blight, caused an intensity of want and suffering which the uneducated naturally set down to those things commonly pointed out to them as their grievances. The union with England, and the taxation to support the English Church, were saddled with the blame of all they endured. No doubt the latter, which ought to have been considered as part of the rent, into which it was afterwards confused, did press heavily on the people, as with the increase of numbers, and probably also a diminution in the wealth of Ireland, the share of each individual in the general dividend grew less. The tithes in collection were more oppressive than rent, owing to the neediness of the clergy and the unprincipled agents they were obliged to employ as collectors, the tithe proctors standing in much the same relationship to the Irish that the publicans did to the Jews. The landlord could afford to let the people fall into arrear, or was so far gone in ruin himself that he let his rents go with the rest; but the clergy were neither reckless nor affluent. Besides this, the payment of tithes was demanded in the name of a religion not only, in the opinion of the people, false and destructive, but openly arrayed against their own. Accordingly, when they had reached a state in which the least burden became oppressive, the wrath of the peasantry was turned against tithes. If the grievance had been confined to the farmer class it would not have been so dangerous; but owing to the infinite subdivision of land, the annoyance of tithes was brought home to the whole population. A money payment was particularly felt, because the Irish lived, not by wages, but by patches of potato land. Work was only to be procured by a few (and then at fourpence a-day) on gentlemen's demesnes—the other employers having divided and subdivided their farms, first down to the point at which they could do their own work, then to being of that class which is itself in need of employment. Although, therefore, the same conditions made the tithes of each extremely trifling in amount, yet owing to the scarcity of money the compounded tithes were a harassing burden to the poor, while tithes uncompounded were, in their nature, still more intolerable.

Without entangling ourselves in archæological researches with respect to the tithes of the Irish Church, we may here briefly state that by the Act of Parliament which imposed the necessity of using the liturgy of the Church of England on the Irish clergy, tithes were transferred from the Church of Rome to the Church of England. But during the period of confusion that followed it was almost impossible to levy them; and the holders of benefices, who lived for security within the pale, or else in England, were glad to take anything they could get. The consequence was, that at the beginning of the 18th century a very small proportion indeed of the ancient tithes were possessed by the Irish branch of the Established Church. In 1730 the clergy revived their claim to tithes of agistment, that is, tithes levied on pasture land; but the Irish parliament intervened, and in 1735 such a law was passed as practically did away with tithes of this description. In 1810 and the two following years unsuccessful motions were made for an inquiry into the collection of tithes; but in 1816 a committee for that purpose being appointed for England and Wales, on the motion of Mr.



Peel its operation was extended to Ireland. These deliberations, however, were attended by no result until the year 1823, when a bill for legalizing the composition of tithes was introduced by Mr. Goulburn. It was intended by the Government that the bill should compel the clergy to accept a composition, that is, a pecuniary payment instead of one in kind, for a period not exceeding twenty-one years. In this shape it met with such violent opposition that it was necessary to modify it from a compulsory to a permissive enactment, and as such it was attended with the best results. Nothing could have been more vexatious than the levy of tithes in kind, the tithe proctor invading the fields of the peasantry and deliberately selecting as his prey the best ridges of potatoes and stacks of corn. This method of procedure naturally created bad blood, and led to violence and illegal resistance; and even the partial change introduced by a simple permissive bill had a tranquillizing effect on the country.

Such was the position of the Tithe question in 1829. It was the steadiest of those lights which Mr. O'Connell set dancing before the impetuous and heated people of Ireland, and absorbed some of the ardour which would otherwise have been spent in pursuit of Repeal of the Union. In England Reform was already looming in sight—Roman Catholic grievances, a great measure of Relief having been passed, were thrown off the parliamentary conscience—the Tory Ministry was sinking—great exasperation was felt against the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel by their own party—and revenge, in the shape of a Reform Bill, was brewing against the nomination boroughs, by the operation of which the Catholic cause had triumphed. There, too, a tremendous agitation—to which the distress consequent on the contraction of the currency by the withdrawal from circulation of small notes (1829) added violence—was fast arising, and gave Englishmen enough to think of between their own shores. The Irish Roman Catholic party contributed a compact phalanx of members to the majority, that compelled their emancipators to resign, and put Lord Grey's ministry in their room. But they had their own subjects of agitation, and took no real interest in Reform, which for them was certain to be in the direction it has generally taken in Ireland, whenever England took a step forward, a step back in the sister country. A rumour got abroad that Lord Grey was about to bring in a Bill for the abolition of tithes. The consequence was a general refusal to pay them, in which the people were encouraged by their clergy. Those who did so were denounced as helping to maintain falsehood, just the ground on which, since then, the Maynooth grant has been opposed in England. We have already alluded to the distress caused by a partial failure of the potato crop; and this, along with the effect of the change in the currency, and the injunctions of their priests, made the refusal to pay general and determined. The Protestant clergy, on the other hand, were justified in enforcing their legal rights, and had no choice between doing so and actual starvation. So the "Tithe War" arose, the clergy calling in the aid of police and military, the people hunting down the tithe proctors like wild beasts, and in several instances attacking large escorts of police, inflicting, and of course sustaining, considerable loss. They were an overmatch for the powers of the law in this struggle; scouts, swift of

foot, gave warning of the approach of the legal spoilers ; in a few minutes everything available was removed, and, rather than let their crops fall into the hands of those who came to seize them, they preferred to devastate their fields as before an invading enemy. And not only were tithes withheld, but reprisals were inflicted for the attempt to levy them. The clergy had their property destroyed, their cattle houghed, and in many instances their houses were attacked and they and their families murdered. In the most disturbed parts of the country it was necessary to fortify the glebe houses ; the lower windows were built up, and such precautions taken as would enable the inhabitants to stand a midnight siege. Nor were attacks made upon the clergy alone, but those who paid tithes were persecuted alike with those who demanded the payment. The result was that the attempt to levy them at the point of the bayonet was a total failure. In some dioceses, particularly in Cashel, Emly, Ossory, Ferns, Leighlin, and Kildare, tithes were practically abolished for a couple of years, not by law, but by will of the people. The clergy were reduced to great poverty in the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny, King's County, Queen's County, Carlow, Kildare, and Wexford. Many of them were only saved from starvation by the assistance afforded by the country gentry, who sent them from time to time presents of sheep, coals, potatoes, or money. At the same time the whole country was in great distress ; a sum of £50,000 was voted to relieve the starving peasantry ; and of course Mr. O'Connell was in an unusual state of activity, and his Association, under one or other of its many titles, in full eruption. Mr. Stanley (Lord Derby), the Chief Secretary for Ireland under the Whig Government, considered it necessary to subject "the Liberator" to a prosecution under one of the Acts (against unlawful assemblies) passed to restrain the excesses of the agitators. The indictment included several minor offenders, but although a conviction was obtained, the Government, as Mr. O'Connell boasted on a public platform, were afraid to call him up to receive sentence, and the Act which sustained the prosecution was allowed to expire. Meanwhile, committees of both Houses were appointed to examine into the tithe question. Mr. Stanley was chairman of the committee of the Lower House. Lord Lansdowne brought up the Report of the Lords. It was advised that an advance should be made to the starving clergy of the tithes due on 1831, without prejudice to arrears of longer standing, which they might collect if they could ; nor did the Statute of Limitations apply to tithes. The one year's arrears due in the five dioceses already mentioned, which were the principal defaulters, amounted to about £84,000. The Government was to have power to recoup itself by a levy of the arrears advanced, but ultimately, out of £1,000,000, only about £12,000 was recovered, and then the attempt was abandoned. The years '27, '28, and '29, were to be taken as criteria of the amount to which the clergy were entitled. It was also reported advisable that tithes should be commuted for a charge on land, "both to secure the interests of the church and the welfare of the country." It was most unfortunate for the church that its friends saw fit to oppose this advice, which, had it been acted upon, would have strengthened, if not secured, its position against future assaults. Mr. Stanley



brought in three bills, embodying the recommendations of the committees. One was for the redemption by the landlords of the tithe composition at sixteen years' purchase, and further leave was given by the bill for their purchase by the State. At sixteen years' purchase the tithes, which were estimated at £600,000 a-year, were worth £9,600,000. This bill was allowed to stand over. The other two passed into law; one, establishing Commissioners for assessing the value of tithes, abolished all the modes of collecting them in force, and gave the power of proceeding against the landlords by civil action; the other, to ascertain claims for arrears, make advances, and take securities for repayment. It was probably owing to the pressure of the Reform question that tithe commutation was not settled at the same time; but Reform was the great question of the moment, and eclipsed every other. A settlement involving so much effort, excitement, and sacrifice, is generally followed by a lassitude of the public mind. The attempt of the Lords to "stem the current of democracy" had only proved the strength of the current and the weakness of the barrier, and had been succeeded by an outburst of popular violence in England which almost surpassed any similar movement in Ireland. The consequence was that Lord Grey, in 1832, carried the bill through the House of Lords by a majority of seven; but a motion to postpone the disfranchisement of rotten boroughs having been carried, and the King having refused to swamp the Opposition by the creation of new peers, the Ministry resigned their charge of the bill, and informed his Majesty that they only held their places pending the appointment of successors. The King gladly sent for Lord Lyndhurst, who advised him to consult the Duke of Wellington. The Duke threw the responsibility on Peel. Meanwhile, the House of Commons passed a resolution praying the King to call to his council such a Ministry as would foster the bill. There was no choice, therefore, but to recall Earl Grey, and the Reform Bill was immediately carried. In the agitation by which it was forced upon the Peers, Mr. O'Connell had borne his part; and to the compact body of Irish members who followed him as their leader, the Government were indebted for their majority in the House of Commons. Nevertheless the measure for Ireland introduced by Mr. Stanley was in a retrograde direction. The counties, which contained seven million inhabitants, had sixty-four members; and the six or seven hundred thousand of the boroughs absorbed the rest. The bill did not tend materially to change this inequality; and while it reduced the number of county voters to about 52,000 by raising the qualification to £50 for occupiers and £10 for leaseholders having leases for ninety-nine years, by raising the franchise in boroughs from £5 to £10 they were made close. The bill was warmly opposed by O'Connell and Shiel as decreasing the constituency, and giving an advantage to the Protestant section which was as superior in property as the Roman Catholic in population; and they urged the resuscitation of the forty shilling freeholders, whose political extinction had been a *quid pro quo* for Catholic emancipation. But all their attempts to liberalize the measure failed, and the only concession was that Masters of Arts should be qualified to vote in the university, which received one additional member out of the five added to the representation of Ireland.

In the year 1834 the measure which Mr. Stanley introduced in 1832 for the redemption of tithes was re-introduced by Mr. Littleton, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, the period assigned for redemption being from fourteen to twenty years. This attempt to settle the question failed; and Lord Grey having been forced to resign in consequence of his determination to continue the Act against unlawful assemblies in Ireland, in the following year the King dismissed Lord Melbourne's Ministry, and summoned the Tories to his councils. Sir Henry Hardinge's bill to abolish tithes in consideration of £75 for every £100 of composition, to be redeemable, and the proceeds invested in land or otherwise, fell through, owing to the speedy dissolution of the Tory Ministry. Sir Robert Peel's hundred days' premiership was brought to an untimely end by the success of Lord John Russell's resolution to appropriate to secular purposes the surplus revenues of the Irish Church; and, in accordance with this, when Lord Melbourne's Ministry was reinstated, Lord Morpeth brought in a bill containing the famous appropriation clause. By the sequestration of all benefices not containing fifty Protestants, a large amount was to be made available for education. This had, in the year 1831, been put upon a national basis, in accordance with a plan proposed by a Commission in 1825, and for some years suspended in the intentions of the Whigs. Perhaps this is a good opportunity for devoting a few words to education in Ireland, as it was now for the first time proposed that it should come in for the spoils of the Established Church. Previous to 1831 the only educational agencies were the Kildare Place Schools (established 1817), to which, at one time, it seemed possible the Roman Catholic bishops might give their adhesion, and the Hibernian School Society, which did not receive, like the former, public assistance. This most inadequate machinery for the education and civilizing of Ireland was entirely under the control of the Protestant landlords and clergy. On the establishment of a national system, presided over by a mixed board of seven Commissioners, including the Duke of Leinster and the Protestant and Roman Catholic Archbishops of Dublin, a system, based upon a principle of common Christianity, and forbidding the clergy or others to interfere with the religion of children of other denominations than their own, was almost unanimously rejected by the Irish Church. They objected to everything in the new system that made it acceptable to the Roman Catholics. Nothing less than the admission of the whole Bible would satisfy their consciences, and that not only at specified times, but at every hour of the day. They objected to what they considered a mutilation and garbling of Holy Scripture, and the extracts being in some instances from the Douay version. The permission to the Roman Catholic clergy to give separate instruction to children of their own persuasion was objected to as encouraging "popery," and interfering with their right, as clergy of the religion by law established, to consider every man's child their own. The Roman Catholic element in the governing body was another stumbling-block. These grounds of objection, whether they did or did not justify the secession of the Established clergy from the established system of education, and their setting up educational dissent, undoubtedly showed them to be a highly conscientious



tious body of men, ready to make great sacrifices for the sake of principle, and firm in their allegiance to the Word of God. It may be imagined how difficult they found it, where Protestants were few, to support their own denominational schools in rivalry with those of the National Board; but they have continued to do so for nearly forty years, principally out of their own incomes, with the assistance of £13,000 a-year devoted to the salaries of parish clerks. Besides entailing upon themselves the support of their schools, they also had the mortification of seeing the children of the Roman Catholics receiving a greatly superior education to the children of their own flock; for although the Kildare Place training school turned out many excellent masters and mistresses, they were admitted to be inferior to those who issued from Marlborough Street, and in a very large proportion of the Church Education Schools the teachers were without any training, and the system of inspection, as we can testify, was lamentably deficient and unreal. Nevertheless, for principle sake, they allowed almost the whole education of the country to fall into the hands of the Roman Catholics, so much were they opposed to their having anything to do with it. Introduced by the great conservative chief when he occupied the post of Chief Secretary under a Whig Government, the national system of education has, until the confusion of all old lines which has lately taken place, been under the patronage of both parties in the State; and neither Sir Robert Peel nor the Earl of Derby offered any encouragement to the Irish clergy in their attitude of resistance. On the contrary, the small minority who, on principle, supported national education, received most of the good things which Government had to give away, and the majority saw themselves to a great extent shut out from preferment, and passed in the race by men whom they charged with time-serving and dishonesty. It is needless to say that the clergy who supported national education were as honourable and principled as those who opposed it; but when will men—even clergymen—learn to be charitable? In forty years we have seen Ireland educated, and, to a great degree, civilized by the system introduced by Mr. Stanley, which it was fondly hoped, by bringing the children of the nation together in the same schools in that hour when friendships are formed, the principle of association most active, and religious animosity undeveloped, the generation that should arise out of them should be welded together, and Ireland should no longer contain two hostile nations. But this glorious dream was frustrated—if, indeed, it was more than a dream—by the stern refusal of the Protestant clergy, no matter how desirable the end, to consent to what they considered ungodly in the means. And what was the consequence? The inhabitants of Ireland became more distinctly two nations than ever, the Protestants more intensely Protestant, the Roman Catholics more intensely Romanist, and the Bible, to honour and glorify which was the whole desire of the clergy, was made loathsome in the eyes of those upon whom it was intended to force it. Happily the day has now gone by, but we can ourselves remember a time when Bible-burning was common among the Roman Catholics. The proposal, then, to appropriate to education the surplus funds of the Irish Church was, in point of fact, a proposition to give it to Roman Catholic education, to

devote it to a purpose from which the Protestant minority would receive no direct benefit. The Appropriation clause made Lord Morpeth's bill unsuccessful in passing the House of Lords, and again caused its rejection in 1836 and the year following, on which latter occasions it appeared without the redemption clauses. In 1838 resolutions were carried by a large majority in the House of Commons, which, owing to the unfortunate circumstance that Sir Robert Peel could not make up his mind to accept them, were not embodied in the bill introduced in the same year. They comprised the commutation of tithe composition for a charge of 70 per cent. on the first estate of inheritance; its collection by Government and application to local purposes; the surplus to go to the Consolidated Fund, out of which the clergy should be paid, through commissioners to be appointed for the purpose, and who should make a just distribution; the State to have power of redeeming the payment by sixteen years' purchase of the original composition; the purchase money to be invested and managed for the clergy by the commissioners. This was what was wanting to make the church safe by separating it from the land of Ireland and from all ancient endowments. But its friends were afraid; and, accordingly, a bare measure of commutation came out in the end, the reduction being reduced from 30 to 25 per cent. It was the result of a compromise arranged between the Conservative leaders and the Liberals, in order to put the two Houses in harmony, and to remove a political stumbling-block. The necessary evil was accepted of a diminution of income, but the proffered security for the peaceful enjoyment of what remained was rejected, as if the anomalous position occupied by the church was actually what she valued more than her substantial advantages. The landlords added the entire amount of the tithe composition to the rents of their tenantry, putting 25 per cent. into their own pockets for the trouble of collection—a tolerably good allowance; however, they received in return the unpopularity of exacting higher rents. There could be no more amazing proof of the ignorance of the Irish peasantry, and the ease with which they could then be duped, or else how much more they thought of their pride than of their pockets, that they never raised a murmur against paying through their landlords what they were ready to die sooner than pay in the shape of tithes to the clergy.

We have now traced the history of tithes;—first their transference from the Church of Rome to the Church of England; then their lying in abeyance; then the abolition of tithes of agistment, by which their burden was thrown off the grass-land demesnes of the gentry on the small culture of the poor; then their peaceful levy, until the penal laws which had made half the population of Ireland at one time conforming Protestants, and would, if they had been persevered in, have made the remainder the same, were gradually relaxed; then the rising spirit of resistance to the invasion of their fields and the seizure of their crops by tithe proctors, the bulk of the Protestant poor having by this time been lost by the negligence in spiritual matters, and the zeal in pecuniary, of the English clergy, and won by the silent working and self-sacrificing devotion of the Romish priests; then the permissive composition of tithes in 1823, by which a way was opened to the clergy of rendering the burden of their support less galling to the shoulders of



the people ; then the tithe war, and the payment of a great host of rectors and vicars out of the national exchequer ; then the attempt, by the Appropriation clause, to take something away from the church for secular purposes ; lastly, the commutation of tithes to rent-charge. We have omitted to mention, as not connected with the tithe question, an organic change which was made in the frame of the church by Earl Grey's government in 1833. Twenty-two episcopal or archiepiscopal sees were consolidated into twelve dioceses, presided over by two archbishops and ten bishops. With the more important and living dioceses were grouped those that had less claim to independent existence. Thus Ossory, with its ancient cathedral of St. Canice, received Ferns with none. Dublin, with its two cathedrals, St. Patrick's and Christ Church, took in the diocese of Kildare, which had only a fine ruin. The archiepiscopal see of Cashel was reduced to a simple bishopric, and absorbed by Waterford. The province of Tuam was, at the same time, united to that of Dublin, so that but two archbishoprics remained. Dromore was associated with Down and Connor, thus forming the most important diocese in Ireland, containing a third of the whole church population. Elphin, Clonfert, Cloyne, Clogher, Killala, and Raphoe, were grafted into stronger stocks. Parishes where the Protestant population had disappeared were grouped together on the same system ; and the revenues of the bishoprics and benefices thus suppressed were handed over to an ecclesiastical commission to be administered for church purposes, such as building and repairing churches, paying parish clerks and sextons, and supplying church requisites. A reduction might have been made with advantage in the number of Irish dignitaries, many of whom enjoyed empty titles, to which, in some cases, instead of revenue a small charge was attached. The crowd of unreal dignitaries tended to the depreciation of the offices they held. Titular archdeacons, and deans without cathedrals, prebendaries lacking prebendal stalls, and precentors whose choirs were non-existent, impressed upon the whole church a character of hollowness and unreality. Those things which decay are ready to vanish away ; and such meaningless titles rather lead us to such a conclusion with regard to the institution in which they were found to prevail. If all the rotten timbers of the church had been removed at that time, when the Whigs were as little inclined for her destruction as the Tories, if, by the friendly efforts of both parties her maintenance had been put upon the consolidated fund, she would now be standing unassailable ; but the fear of meddling with what was felt to be in an unsafe condition made her friends resist the remedy, and await the inevitable issue of the process of decay.

Within the period we have traversed in this chapter another measure was undergoing gestation, namely, the Municipal Corporations Act. The Roman Catholics had hitherto been admissible to corporations in Ireland, but were seldom if ever admitted. The object of this measure was to place municipal elections upon a popular basis. It was twice carried by Lord John Russell in the House of Commons, and twice abandoned upon the House of Lords raising the qualification to £10. In the year 1840 the Lords' amendment was accepted and the bill passed.

Another important measure that lies within our limits was the bill based upon the suggestions of Mr. Nicholl's committee to establish a hundred workhouses to provide for the immense number of Irish poor who previously lived by begging, and swarmed like locusts about private houses and in the streets of towns and villages. As a better opportunity will arise of considering the Irish poor laws, we will only now add that this bill, which was introduced and passed in 1837, having stood over to the following year in consequence of the death of William IV., then became law, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of Mr. O'Connell and his friends.

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

Repeal Agitation—Father Matthew—Monster Meetings—The Clontarf Meeting prohibited—Mr. O'Connell's trial—Annulled by the House of Peers—Arguments for Repeal—The Irish Constabulary—The Queen's Colleges—Increase of the Maynooth Grant—Inadequacy of the remedial measures—Growth of population—Rise and increase of Absenteeism—Agents—Ribbonism.

WE have now left behind some of the most remarkable landmarks in the modern history of Ireland, the last of these being the group of three measures which the Whigs presented to the Irish party in 1838 and the two following years as the fruit of their long connection. The four years which immediately follow merely form the prelude to a great national tragedy. The progress of events which they comprise can be briefly told, and we must then devote some space to a consideration of the internal condition of the country, and to the sad changes gradually taking place in it. In the year 1841 Repeal of the Union was hotly agitated in Ireland, but it was not until the defeat of the Ministry, which had so long been held in power by Mr. O'Connell, and the accession of Sir Robert Peel, that it assumed its full violence. The Repeal Association was founded in 1842, and the rent collected by its organized machinery amounted to £3,000 a-week. Father Matthew, the great apostle of temperance, had, in the previous year, succeeded in working a wonderful reformation, and hundreds of thousands had taken a pledge to abstain from intoxicating liquors; and so great was his success that the consumption of whisky temporarily sunk (though it afterwards rose to double the original amount) from ten to three millions of gallons annually. The savings thus effected were thrown into the treasury of repeal, and to this the poorest labourer, earning 4d. a-day, gladly contributed; and farmer and labourer gathered in from a circle of twenty miles to attend the monster meetings at which the Irish tribune descanted upon the wrongs of the country, and promised a future of national independence. It is said that there was an attendance of a hundred thousand men at more than one of these meetings, the scenes of which were Trim and Mullingar, in the county of Meath, the wild mountain of Slieve-na-Mon, in the county of Tipperary, and the grassy hill of Tara, where the Irish crowned their ancient kings, and the apostle of Ireland converted its monarch and taught him the doctrine of the Trinity by the shamrock. At the last-named meet-



ing, held on the 15th of August, 1843, the number present was estimated at a quarter of a million, and the scene upon that usually sequestered spot, with its dreams and associations, is described by those who witnessed it as most strange and exciting. Such enthusiasm might well overpower the calmest reason; but those who came from all parts of Ireland to this national assembly to hear Mr. O'Connell and the other repeal orators were not calm reasoners; and so intense grew the excitement that the agitators themselves were alarmed lest it should assume that tangible form in which the government could deal with it summarily. A few days after another meeting was held at Roscommon, which was also attended by multitudes of the peasantry, a great number of priests, and many persons of influence in the west of Ireland. The government did not in any way interfere with these proceedings except to guard against a disturbance of the peace by having a sufficient force of police and military at hand, though out of sight. They, indeed, removed from the commission of the peace several magistrates who actively took part in the agitation, a step which they could scarcely refrain from if the law deprived the people of Ireland of the right of public meeting. So the summer passed in noise and political turmoil, and it was determined to close the campaign with a great demonstration in the vicinity of the metropolis, which should make a strong impression on the public mind, and manifest the strength of the association. The summons sped through Louth, Meath, and the metropolitan county, calling on the people to meet at Clontarf, two or three miles to the north of Dublin. It is a spot famous for the victory gained over the Danes by Brian Boru, one of the most distinct figures among the early kings of the country, whose enlightened education, acquired in the monastery of Innisfallen, on the Lakes of Killarney, is probably less mythical than his extraordinary prowess. Associated with one of the few victories they have been fortunate enough to win in their own country, and with the only very distinguished Irish king, Clontarf was not badly chosen for a meeting to revive the national independence. The Government, however, wakened up at the last moment, and having permitted the meetings to proceed all through the summer, issued a proclamation forbidding the people to assemble; and this was followed by another proclamation, emanating from Mr. O'Connell himself, in which, though he spoke of the government manifesto as a loosely worded document, issued by certain obscure persons, he counselled submission to an odious and oppressive decree. Early on the morning of the 8th of October, Clontarf was occupied by a considerable force of horse, foot, and artillery; the guns of the Pigeon House Fort were turned upon the Dublin Road, and large bodies of constabulary were placed to intercept and turn back the myriads that drew around the place and choked every approach. The people returned to their homes—the troops and constabulary to their barracks—but the Government were not content with coming off victors in this second battle of Clontarf; they determined that Mr. O'Connell, who had successfully dared so many governments, who had once been actually tried, convicted, and yet went unpunished, should this time be effectually humbled. He had long been looked upon as a sort of Samson among the people of Ireland, one who could, with perfect

safety to himself, defy the Philistine nation by whom they were enslaved; and so the Philistine Lords now determined on clipping the champion's locks. He was arrested, with several other chiefs of the Association, and put on his trial for promoting an unlawful assembly; and notwithstanding the ingenious devices of counsel to retard the trial, the Government showed great determination in persevering with it, and bringing their contemptuous adversary to punishment. We must reserve an account of the particulars of this trial for our memoir of Mr. O'Connell. We can only say here, that it resulted in his conviction, and a severe sentence being passed upon him by Judge Burton, sentences of less severity being passed upon the other agitators, who were also convicted. They were all sent to prison; and it was not the fault of the Government that they did not remain there. The fury of the multitude was terrific, and nothing prevented a general outbreak but a proclamation issued by Mr. O'Connell from Richmond Bridewell, exhorting the people of Ireland to remain quiet, and promising them that in a little time an Irish Parliament would be sitting in College Green. Then the people betook themselves to prayer, and Sunday, July 7, was appointed for that purpose in the Roman Catholic churches throughout Ireland, though in the province of Dublin this religious demonstration was forbidden by the archbishop. Mr. O'Connell's imprisonment did not last long; the validity of the proceedings on his trial having been impeached, though sustained by the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland and the opinion of the twelve judges of England, they were declared void by a majority of law lords in the House of Peers. He was accordingly set free; but the spell was broken. The hitherto invincible champion had suffered a decided defeat from the Government, and never again recovered his prestige. Thus may be said to have ended the great Repeal agitation. It never had the remotest chance of succeeding; and when the question appeared in the House of Commons (this, it must be admitted, was when the tithe question was uppermost), the number of its supporters was 38, and the number of its opponents 523. The most valid argument advanced by Mr. O'Connell was founded upon Absenteeism and all its attendant evils; but it was not at all so clear that Repeal of the Union would remedy the evil as that the Union had occasioned it. The Irish gentry having become accustomed to the more vivid and cultured society of London, could never be allured back to Dublin by the assembling of a provincial Parliament, which could not, if reinstated, hold the position it formerly did before its seduction and ruin by Pitt and Castlereagh. The nobility and gentry of Ireland would neither desire, nor most probably obtain, admission to a reconstituted Irish parliament; and it would most likely be composed of other materials which would not do credit to the country. Mr. O'Connell always declared that he did not desire separation; but were the reins intrusted to a native parliament, it is impossible to say what they would drive to; and it is quite conceivable that the possession of legislative independence might enflame instead of allaying the desire for separation. The degradation involved in the concerns of Ireland being dependent on English intrigues, English interests, and the English aristocracy, was galling enough at an earlier period, but all that was long passed away. We shall probably never see Mr. O'Connell's dream



realized in its entirety, although a Provincial Parliament, similar to the State Legislatures of America, might be conceded with possible advantage. It has also been suggested that a short session of the Imperial Parliament from time to time in the Irish metropolis would be attended with the best results, as it would doubtless be attended with considerable inconvenience to the heads of departments who would be torn from their bodies; nor can we overlook the desolation it would cause in the English law courts, and the disturbance of Aldermen from the city. But such objections are evidently not insurmountable; and Church and Social Science congresses, and meetings of the British Association have showed on a small scale what might be done on a great for the attainment of an object of such immense importance as gratifying the national vanity of Ireland. The presence of the Sovereign would of course be an accompaniment; and it would then be found that the Irish are still as capable of loyalty as they proved in the troubles of the House of Stuart. The return of the chief absentee would be followed by the return of lesser ones. And the Land Question of Ireland, which now looks so formidable, might be solved on easy terms.

The magnitude and violence of the Repeal Agitation, and the great prevalence of crime, obliged Sir Robert Peel to strengthen and re-constitute the Irish Constabulary force—which derived from this fact the soubriquet of “Peelers;”—though less successful in the detection of criminals than the similar English force, no doubt partly owing to the great conspiracy in Ireland to conceal crime, yet with the ignoble though necessary aid of informers and spies, they answer this purpose sufficiently well, and constitute in addition a sort of army of occupation. We may here take occasion to say that through the horrors of the famine and pestilence they performed services on which we can dwell with unmixed pleasure; and although generally engaged in the most invidious duties and faithful in the performance of them, the Roman Catholic portion of the force being trusted by the police officers equally with the Protestant, they have never become unpopular with the Irish people.—Two measures which were passed on the eve of the great calamity about to overtake Ireland demand a brief notice. One was the establishment of three colleges for the promotion of secular education. They carried the principle of the National system to the length of being wholly without the religious organ, and were stigmatized by their opponents as the “Godless Colleges.” On this ground Mr. Gladstone separated from the government; because, “having borne solemn testimony” to the importance of the union of Church and State, he could not be a party to a violation of the principle. It is remarkable that Mr. O’Connell in the House of Commons, and the Earl of Shrewsbury in the Peers, protested against the measure for the same reason; but Sir Robert Peel succeeded in carrying it, £100,000 being granted for building, and £18,000 a year for endowing his three colleges, lights placed north, south, and west, in the land where the rays of Trinity College in the east could not freely penetrate. Belfast College has been the most successful of the three, and has proved a great boon not only to that prosperous and education loving city, but to the Presbyterians of Ulster generally, whether Unitarian or “Old Light.”

Galway College in the west, and Cork College in the south, though most ably conducted, have not attained to the same measure of success, owing to the want of concurrence on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy, the less thirst for education in those parts of Ireland, and the prestige of Trinity College, Dublin. In another educational development Sir Robert Peel met with considerable opposition from many of his own adherents; viz., the increase of the grant to Maynooth from £9,000 to £26,380 a-year. It is most questionable whether in providing an adequate native substitute for the Colleges of St. Omar and Salamanca, where a large portion of students for the priesthood were at that time still obliged to resort, he did a real service to the Roman Catholic Church; but it is quite certain that the effect was to make the priests much stronger in their politics, and less independent of foreign influence. But already, while men were disputing about such rose water measures for the improvement of Ireland, the shadow of the great famine had fallen upon the land. We present our readers with the following terribly significant figures showing how and to what height the increase of population had proceeded, while the wealth of Ireland was diminishing; manufactures decaying; trade stagnant; capital frightened away by the unsettled condition of the country and the increase of crime—the committals for serious offences in 1846 amounting to 31,209. Here are the figures:—

Population of Ireland in 1805,	5,305,456
”	” 1815, 6,142,972
”	” 1825, 7,172,748
”	” 1835, 7,927,989
”	” 1845, 8,344,142
”	” 1846, 8,386,940

Mr. Nicholl's Report, made some ten years before the famine, stated that of this enormous population two and a-half millions were paupers; and the greater part of the remainder depended for existence on a single root crop. Of this there had already been three premonitory failures, which showed the possibility of a failure that would leave the nation face to face with a famine so universal that it would be impossible to cope with it. Meanwhile Absenteeism had gone on progressing, and the people of Ireland threatened with this awful calamity were left more and more alone, and isolated from the sympathy of those who were their natural guardians. The secession of the gentry had begun immediately after the Union. Dublin had first felt the effects of that measure. When the Houses of Parliament closed, to open again not inappropriately as the Bank of Ireland, the halls of the departed senate evermore to be haunted with the clink of money, where the independence of Ireland was bought and sold, the aristocracy began by giving up their town residences; and soon followed up their desertion of the metropolis by the desertion of their estates. The centre of fashion and aristocratic life which parliament had fixed in Dublin being removed across the water, the minor magnates followed the lead of their superiors; and those who had acquired titles and fortune in the transfer of power to England went thither to display the spoils of their country. Thus Absenteeism took its rise, to the great amelioration of the gentry



themselves, who were indeed much in want of some purifying influence to remove the mire through which they had just passed, as well as to soften and humanize them.

In our brief account of the rebellion of '98 we depicted the cruelties practised by the rebels: but there is another side to the picture which we felt had better, for all good purposes, be kept with its face turned to the wall. We will only say here that the conduct of the Irish gentry was inexcusable; while for the acts of a dark, long tortured and insulted peasantry we may make the same allowance that we do for the deeds of madmen. Lord Cornwallis, a veteran soldier, said, in writing to a member of the English government, that the horrible conversation which went on at his dinner-table often made him shudder; and that the spirit of the magistracy and gentry was absolutely diabolical. In one sense the happiest effect of the Union was that it sent these barbarians to England to be educated into humanity; but when their education was completed they did not return. Henceforth they ceased to be Irishmen, and what they gained in culture they lost in sympathy with the people and knowledge of their wants and feelings. The Irish Protestant gentry felt on going back to England after three hundred years that they were returning to their own country. The agents whom they appointed to rule in their stead were often (though a widely different class has since sprung up) men of little education, and less humanity. Often sprung from the peasantry, and serving a noviciate as bailiffs, they united servility to their masters with a brutality of manner which they copied from them, or rather caricatured. These men were responsible for the collection of the rents; and to extract them from a population sunk so low, it was necessary to make use of the full rights of property. There was nothing to save the people from these terrible inquisitors, who had to build up their own fortunes as well as find the rents for their employers. The landlord living in London had no idea that the gold he spent on his carriages and liveries was wrung like heart's blood from the people; and that his pleasures were provided for by untold misery. It was not the interest of the agents to let the horrible means that they were obliged to make use of disturb the affluent happiness of those whose estates they administered; and they took chance in their profitable pursuit of getting a bullet through their heads. Eviction and distraint were their instruments, and it was necessary to use them with a determined unsparing hand. Men whose forefathers had cultivated the same soil from before the English conquest until it was thick with their dust and enriched with the sweat of their brows, were turned out to beg about the roads. It was only by slow degrees that the peasant farmers could be made to understand by repeated proofs that they might be torn from the soil of which they seemed to be a part by the laws of nature; and their first alarm and amazement were soon succeeded by rage and despair. They conceived themselves, in resisting such a dispensation, fighting for their homes and hearths; and considered it lawful in the sight of God to stand up in defence of their supposed rights even to the shedding of blood. But open resistance was in vain; they must carry on their war by a secret society; a sort of *Fehm Gerichte*. The obnoxious landlord or agent was tried

and condemned in secret consistory; the executioners chosen by lot; and the sentence carried out often in open day, in the presence of numerous witnesses; and yet, owing to the universal sympathy, if not complicity of the population, it was almost impossible to find a clue to the perpetrators or prosecute them to conviction. Such was, and is, the Ribbon Society of Ireland; and it is sad to think that this naturally loveable and gentle people should have been by any means perverted into looking with approval on secret assassination as a means of redressing their wrongs. We must speak gently, because we are speaking of a great portion of a nation, a nation in which disregard of the sanctity of human life has been bred by a degree of misery that rendered it intolerable; but to those who believe in divine retribution it will seem as if a curse upon the ground had been brought down by the blood of Norbury, and many others put to death by the Ribbon Society, crying for vengeance. We cannot think, however, that Ribbonism would ever have acquired the power it has done (for we must not conceal from ourselves that it did to a great degree achieve its purpose of checking eviction, partly by attracting public opinion, and partly by arousing the attention of landlords to the doings of their underlings) if the gentry had remained among their people and kept up the old feudal ties. Such an experiment was never tried before as an aristocracy and gentry exercising the full rights of property from another country.

Thus fast in the clutches of agents, their landlords out of earshot, struggling desperately to hold their land, but unable to pay the rack-rent under which they held it, with all the powers of the law, supported by military and police, and whole armies of bailiffs, drivers, "grippers," and process servers, arrayed against them, carrying on an irregular warfare, in which, while the agent came down with his overwhelming forces in open day, they fired from behind hedges on a lonely road, or shot at him through his shutters from the dark night without,—murdering, and in turn being remorselessly driven out on the roads with their children, the Irish people were unconsciously approaching nearer to their doom. Struggling as it were in the darkness to the edge of a precipice over which both should fall, went the owner and the occupier of land. The curse of God, as in the old time, had already lit on the ground for which they strove. The stern exactor of rent was about to be defeated in a way he never dreamed of; the landlord, who spent in the gaiety of London or Brighton the blood-stained money that came over to him from Ireland, to be involved in a common ruin with the miserable men who were plotting murders, and too often executing them, on his Irish property. All who were connected with property in Ireland were destined to share in the effects of the impending disaster, as all deserved to do so. There are those who deny that such calamities are divine judgments on the earth, or that the shadows which fall on the world proceed from the great source of light; but even they must admit at least an apparent connection between the universal reign of murder and oppression in Ireland, and the change that came in the ground, and which for years made the potato rot in it until the atonement was complete. We have been careful to admit, and not to endeavour to dwindle the admission, that the guilt was not all on one side; perhaps we may even be accused of exaggerating the oppression of the



proprietor or his representative, and apologizing for the Ribbonman's lynch law. Far be it from us to do so; we only wish faithfully to represent the situation. The following passage occurs in Mr. Trench's work, 'The Realities of Irish Life,'—"We can scarcely shut our eyes to the fact, that the circumstances, and feelings, which have led to the terrible crime of murder in Ireland are usually very different from those which have led to murder elsewhere. The reader of the English newspaper is shocked at the list of children murdered by professional assassins, of wives murdered by their husbands, of men murdered for their gold. In Ireland that dreadful crime may be almost invariably traced to a wild feeling of revenge for the national wrongs to which so many of her sons believe she has been subjected for centuries." These are the words of one whose life has often been sought by the Ribbonmen, an agent on the largest scale, and whose experience is unrivalled. And when in other portions of the same work we read a history of the measures which this most humane and enlightened agent was compelled to adopt with the people, we can form an approximate guess as to their treatment by less merciful, just, and conscientious masters. If we had space, we should quote Mr. Trench's description of his great raid into the barony of Farney, accompanied by magistrates and bailiffs, and a large body of armed police, to seize the cattle of the tenantry who had rebelled against paying a rack-rent. Since the raids of the Border robbers and Highland chieftains received so severe a check from good King Jamie, such an expedition has probably never been seen. "No sooner," he says, "had this formidable party appeared upon the roads in the open country, than the people rushed to the tops of the numerous hills with which the district abounds; and, as we moved forward, they ran from one hill to another, shouting and cheering with wild defiant cries, and keeping a line parallel to that in which our party was travelling." This expedition proving almost fruitless, as all the cattle had been driven away or locked up, and "not a hoof or horn was left in the whole country side," the grippers and process servers were next set upon the tenantry; but they were equally unsuccessful, and besides were soundly beaten, and ducked in bog-holes, by parties of young men dressed in women's clothes, called "Molly Maguires." Then an order was obtained for "Substitution of Service," and the attempt to post this on the walls of the Roman Catholic chapel led to a collision between the police and the people, in which several of the latter were wounded, and one killed by the fire of the constabulary. Thus the war continued to be waged: Mr. Trench ultimately bringing the tenantry to terms; but it is to his honour that he should have refused to continue in a position where such measures were necessary. Yet this state of things was general over Ireland, and rarely had the people to do with so humane and just an administrator. We are not therefore surprised at the prevalence of that "wild feeling of revenge" of which Mr. Trench speaks in the passage we quoted from the conclusion of his book. Those who were occasionally brought to justice and executed, thought they were dying for their country; and so thought a great portion of their countrymen. After all, it is doubtful if this be even an extenuation of their guilt, for no murderers are so much abhorred by mankind as those who murder on principle,—as for instance

the followers of Bowanee. But the extraordinary belief that their murders were heroic and glorious could only have sprung out of extraordinary circumstances—in other words, out of extreme oppression. We must therefore distribute the blame, and throw some of it on the agents and landlords themselves; and the awful calamity, to which we shall devote the next chapter, fell upon all classes of Irishmen.

The history of Ireland must be read with a constant reference of the mind to its peculiar circumstances, and to its unparalleled sorrows. The possibility, while the potato was sound, of existing with little or no exertion; the improvidence of the people in contracting early marriages,—an improvidence chiefly found among those who are already so poor that the fear of poverty does not operate; the equal improvidence of landlords in permitting infinitesimal subdivision and subletting of the land, the consequent overgrowth and extreme indigence of an insular nation,—the remembrance of all this will make us read Irish history charitably. Above all, we must remember that the Irish passed through a furnace of suffering in “the hungry years,” as they are still called, and in the forced emigration which ensued, that has left them a changed nation, partly for the better—partly for the worse. The events which preceded and followed the famine, the endless agitation, the pursuit of illusions, the magnifying of grievances, the otherwise unaccountable turbulence and excitement and violence which filled the land, the success of the demagogue, the influence of the assassin, were symptomatic of disease. And bearing this in mind, we shall regard leniently, and even with compassionate sympathy, the ravings, the violences, the political contortions, into which the people of Ireland have been thrown by unexampled sufferings. We must now enter upon the most painful part of our brief narrative, perhaps the most painful scene in modern history.

## CHAPTER IX.

1845—1847.

Dependence on the potato—The blight sudden—Sir Robert Peel's anxiety—His resignation—Return to power—Repeal of the Corn Laws—Activity of the Protestant clergy—Private efforts—Public works—Defeat of the Coercion Bill—Lord John Russell's measures—Blight repeated in 1846 and 1847—Severity of the famine.

THE Irish, before the events which we are now about to record, were living in the closest conceivable relationship to the soil. The existence of each family depended upon a small patch of potatoes outside their doors. The potato suited so well the climate and circumstances of Ireland, that a large portion of the land under cultivation was devoted to its growth. It required less pains to be bestowed upon it than any similar crop; flourished in the moist climate of the country on almost any soil; and needed no process of manufacture before being used as food.\* Hence it was, with the exception of a little oats, the

\* It was remembered afterwards that the potato rot had been foreseen and foretold; but what is there that happens or does not happen, that is not predicted by



only crop raised by small occupiers. As the holdings grew less and less by continued subdivision, the quantity of land under the potato steadily increased; the most part of each little patch being devoted to the production of a direct supply of food, and those crops which are raised for sale and the supply of luxuries, being almost wholly abandoned. Few Irish peasants ever tasted meat in those days; and we can remember when it was set before a large company of them at a dinner given by a landlord to the tenantry of his estate, the curious avidity with which, for the first time in their lives, they ate animal food. Having no more concentrated form of nourishment, the quantity of potatoes which they consumed was very great; it was truly surprising to behold the smoking heap poured out upon the table for a single meal, and which the family collected about it consumed in the simplest fashion imaginable. The peculiar characteristic of this description of food, that it took up so large a space in the system, caused the change to another kind of food containing the same amount of nutriment in a much smaller space, to have an extraordinary effect on the health of the nation, for which due allowance has never been made. Considering how much the individual is acted upon, and how strongly the disposition is affected by anything that disagrees with the system, the same cause operating upon a whole nation, is not to be disregarded.

At last 1845 came, with its burden of woe. A fine season gave promise of great abundance; the potatoes particularly were a splendid crop, and it was believed that those pits, resembling graves, in which the Irish were accustomed to store them up for the winter, would be unusually well filled. At the opening of the session of 1845, a passage in the royal speech which congratulated the Houses on the prosperous condition of Ireland, might be made the text of a homily. "I have observed with sincere satisfaction," said her Majesty, "that the improvement which is manifest in other parts of the country has extended to Ireland. . . . The political agitation and excitement which I have heretofore had occasion to lament, appears to have gradually abated." The beginning of August was fine; but about the middle of the month there was a heavy downpour of rain, accompanied by lightning; and it was remarked that the latter was of a diffused kind, slightly firing, as it seemed, the whole atmosphere. Immediately after, it was noticed that a peculiar stench arose from the fields of potatoes; their stems and leaves speedily withered and became of a black colour; and the apples containing the seed of the plant had fallen off prematurely. Then the

somebody? There were observers who fancied they perceived for twenty years a steady deterioration in the size and quality of the root; and it was mysteriously propounded, and has since been repeated in serious history, that it was "wearing out," we are left to suppose from over use. The culture, no doubt, had grown extremely careless, owing to the certainty of a fair return, no matter how little pains were bestowed upon it; and this caused the potatoes of the poor to run small, but can have had nothing to do with inducing the rot. In one sense the "wearing out" theory is less incredible; the plant was not propagated from its seed which is contained in the apple, and produces new species, different from the parent stock, but it was propagated, without renewal, from the root itself; this may have weakened, and so made it more liable to atmospheric influences. It was also suggested that the habit of cutting the potato into as many pieces as it had buds was weakening to the plant; and many people now sow it whole.

spade showed that a large proportion of the roots were wholly or partially black and rotten, unfit for human food. The part of the crop lost in the first year of the blight (1845-6) was variously estimated at an eighth, a quarter, and a half. Probably the last fraction represents the amount finally lost, and the first the portion that was found to be gone when the crop was dug out; for the disease proceeded in the storehouse almost as rapidly as in the ground. During a short interval the effect was felt only in the rise of prices, and as the extent of the failure became known, a feeling of vague uneasiness prevailed; but still the peasantry, accustomed to privation, and wont in the worst extremity to nail up their cabin doors and turn to begging, did not realize their danger. They were completely incapable of looking forward. But one man placed at the head of the state did look forward long and anxiously into the gathering darkness, and determined to make any sacrifice to avert what he, almost alone, foresaw would follow. One man, while the others slept, prayed that this cup might pass away from Ireland; and Irishmen should never forget to him the deep solicitude he displayed for their country on this occasion. Sir Robert Peel, from the time that accounts reached him of the prevalence of the disease, was deeply impressed with a sense of the responsibility which it entailed upon the government. He was in constant communication with the lord lieutenant, and spent day and night, as he afterwards told the House of Commons, in perusing reports from different parts of Ireland. The result was that he became convinced of the necessity of repealing the corn-laws, (a measure to which he had already been advancing in spite of himself,) and removing every restriction on the food of a people now entering into the skirts of a famine. He accordingly urged on his colleagues, but unsuccessfully, the suspension by orders in council of the duties on importation. They consented, however, to the appointment of a commission to inquire into the means best adapted to provide for the wants of the people, and to check the malignant fever which attended like a shadow on the footsteps of destitution. The cabinet met at the end of November to receive the report. It was proposed that Indian corn, which was the cheapest and most available supply of food that could in a short space of time be poured into the country, and the duty on which was regulated by that on British barley, should be entirely relieved from restriction; but Peel would not consent to abrogating the corn-laws in part, without doing so altogether. The consequence was his resignation and the dissolution of the ministry; but Lord John Russell being unable to form a cabinet, he immediately returned to the helm, with his hands free to carry out the policy which he considered necessary for the salvation of the country. How he fought the battle in parliament and carried it through the house amid an excitement seldom equalled in political life, belongs to English history, and is beyond the scope of a historical introduction. Then all over the world the grain-ships were laden to bring food to this famine-stricken island,—the united kingdom being the first country to adopt, under such inexorable pressure, those principles of free trade, destined to result in an enormous expansion of her commerce, and increase of her prosperity. But a supply of cheap food was not enough; it was also necessary to give the people of Ireland money wherewith to



purchase it; and for this purpose public works were set on foot, private benevolence was supplemented by grants of public money, and corn was bought up by the government and distributed to the people in the most distressed localities. A great amount of heroic charity was called out; gently bred men and women sacrificed health and fortune in struggling with the famine; spending their time in soup kitchens, and relieving the famishing peasantry. The Protestant clergy were particularly active in the work—and for once in the history of Ireland distinctions of creed were forgotten; the spirit of Christianity prevailed over the letter; the Roman Catholic priest and Protestant clergyman worked harmoniously together, fought the battle shoulder to shoulder, and many of them fell side by side on the same field. Two clergymen, the Rev. F. F. Trench and the Rev. Richard Chevenix Trench (afterwards Archbishop of Dublin) were foremost leaders in the relief movement, and by establishing soup kitchens or “eating houses,” as they were termed by their authors, in the southwest of the county of Cork, saved the lives of multitudes. From this time the animosity to the Protestant clergy died away; and, but for the attempts at proselytism, would have wholly ceased. We can remember the softened mood of the peasantry, and how it hardened again when unfortunately an unfair use was attempted to be made (not in the particular case we have mentioned, but in other parts of Ireland) of the influence so nobly acquired. In their efforts to relieve distress, the clergy were not alone; men of fortune had considerable works executed on their estates. Towers were built, which will be a puzzle to posterity unless some archæologist light on the explanation, that they mark footsteps of a great famine. The Government, in the winter of 1845, spent nearly a million in relief; but much that was laid out on public works might have been better expended. There was not sufficient care taken in the selection of overseers. The wages were so much beyond anything that had ever been heard of in Ireland, that many farmers forsook their land and took to stone-breaking; and it was necessary at last to lower the rate from 2s. and 1s. 6d. to 6d. a-day. The rule that the works were not to be such as would serve the interest of any of the proprietors of the district in which they were situated, while it did not prevent the perpetration of jobs, was a most stupid expedient for that purpose, and covered Ireland with follies. Roads were made that led nowhere, from no place, and bridges were thrown across rivers where there were no roads. However, the great object of saving the lives of the people was accomplished for that winter; the loss being chiefly confined to those who had been already so reduced by hunger and disease that they could not bear the exposure and hardship of the public works, coupled with the alteration of diet. In certain localities, also, where the destruction of the potato crop was total, it was impossible to be in time with help, and numbers quietly laid them down and died before the public or the authorities were aware of their destitution. In those parts of Ireland where the famine was very severe, nothing was more remarkable than what we have just alluded to, the tameness with which the unhappy peasantry submitted to starvation; not putting out the same energy to live that Englishmen would exert under the same circumstances. But where the distress only pinched without crushing, as in the Midland and North-

eastern counties, the effect was to stimulate crime to an enormous extent—as we have already had occasion to observe,—the committals for serious offences in the second year of the famine amounting to more than thirty thousand. Something in the shape of a Coercion Bill was considered necessary in consequence of the disturbed state of the country; but a generous feeling made such a measure of severity towards an unhappy people distasteful to the liberal party; and the protectionists were burning for revenge on the leader who had turned upon his own party, and bereft it at a blow of that which was best worth while defending, and without which the rest of their political creed had lost its importance. They stood like warriors with nothing left to fight for but revenge, and on the first opportunity deserted to the enemy. Sir Robert was defeated on the introduction of his bill by a political combination; and Lord John Russell undertook and succeeded in forming a ministry. He too felt himself obliged to propose a similar though milder measure; but his party not feeling able to accept a proposition so like what they had just rejected, compelled him to abandon it for a while. In the end it was found necessary to pass still more painful measures, and to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland that arbitrary power of arrest which some may think not more inconsistent with liberty than the state of things against which it is employed. It certainly could not have been placed in more trustworthy hands than Lord Clarendon's. In the Irish Book of Common Prayer, there is a petition of a very characteristic kind, that the Lord Lieutenant “may wield the sword which has been committed to his hands with justice and mercy;” and never was the sword wielded in Ireland with more regard for those virtues, than in the Lord Lieutenancy of this great Whig peer.

The year 1846 was the real beginning of the famine. There was the same disturbance of the elements as in the preceding August; again the atmosphere was unusually quick with electricity, and the lightning that mingled with the hissing rain, ran along the ground as if in the accomplishment of a mission of destruction. Not only was the disease in the atmosphere, but in the seed; and almost the entire crop was found to be turned to rotteness in the ground. A simultaneous deficiency in the harvests abroad made the situation still more terrible. Immense sums were poured out from the national purse; drainage works were commenced on an immense scale, and the Navigation laws and duties on corn were entirely suspended. The crop lost in 1846 was valued at between five and six millions; and this enormous loss, (amounting to nearly half the rental of Ireland,) fell chiefly on the peasantry, and left them completely destitute; and in 1847 the loss of the whole crop was again repeated. On the other hand the total amount expended upon relief was nearly eight millions sterling. The continuance of the famine necessitated a change in the poor laws. The act of 1838, which we have already noticed, (chapter vii.) divided Ireland into 130 unions and 2,050 electoral divisions; the average area of the former being 160,000 acres, and the average population 62,884. It is obvious that the workhouses were as inadequate to meet a general famine, as the staffs of militia regiments would be to defend the country against an invasion. From the extremities of unions so large, the starving population, whom privation had made apathetic, could not



reach the workhouse door; and if they did, not one-twentieth could obtain admission. Those who were taken in were only the worst cases; and the suffocating atmosphere of the overcrowded wards soon completed the work of destruction. What was needed was that the workhouses should be centres of a system of relief, and should radiate out food to the whole district which belonged to each; but this the state of the law forbade previously to 1847. The rates struck for each electoral division being in proportion to the number it contributed to the recipients of relief, it was the direct interest of the ratepayers to keep down pauperism, and keep out those likely to come upon the rates. This has, since the famine, tended very much to the unpeopling of the country; the rates in the case of a holding of less value than £4 a-year being paid by the landlord; half where it amounted to more; and remembering that the poor-rates once ruined half the gentry of Ireland, it is natural they should think the less human beings the better. But the effect of this provision on the conduct of landlords will be more fully explained further on. In October 1847 the Poor Law Extension Act came into force. An outcry had been raised in England that the landlords should support the people; but political economists denied both the fitness and the possibility of their doing so. A committee of the House of Lords reported against any kind of outdoor relief. The Government took a middle course,—the new bill authorizing the guardians to give no outdoor relief to the able-bodied excepting food—and food only when the workhouse was full, or unfit for their reception; but room for receiving them was to be increased by permitting outdoor relief to be given to the impotent. Relief Committees were also established; and no exertion which it was possible to make was omitted by the Government to alleviate the sufferings of the people. But notwithstanding all that could be done, it was estimated that at least half a million of people perished. In Skibbereen the whole population of eleven thousand died of famine and disease. In the words of Lord John Russell “a famine of the thirteenth century had fallen on a population of the nineteenth.” We will not attempt more than the briefest description of the horrors which, in those famine years, were witnessed by residents in Ireland. The look which the faces of the people wore; and which those who were of mature age never quite lost, testified to the rigour of their sufferings. The nation has never recovered its characteristic gaiety; its sports, its songs, its dances have not revived; its enthusiasm has taken a permanently gloomy tinge. That awful time of physical suffering in which the rustic population crowded into the towns starving, and no one was much startled at seeing them dropping dead in the streets,—when those who opened their doors in the morning were not surprised if a corpse fell into their arms,—when dead bodies were often discovered in woods and other hiding places where the dying wretches had gone to hide their mortality,—when human nature sometimes lost its best instincts, and parents and children fought like beasts for the last morsel of food,—in which whole families were found lying together dead in their poor cabins,—in which gentlemen’s houses were, as we can remember, besieged by emaciated crowds around whom hung a horrible famine stench, which carried about the seeds of the deadly fever. That period has left marks upon Ireland which twenty years

have not perfectly effaced. There are still in our workhouses the invalides of the famine. There is still the depression on the spirits of the people. We have but a dingy picture in our memory of the horrors of the famine years; but a vivid description of them will be found in the appendix to a work we have already quoted, Mr. Trench's 'Realities of Irish Life.' The Rev. F. F. Trench tells how, in his tour through the south-west of Cork, he saw no children at play, but the few who crawled about the doors were mere skeletons, their legs swinging like the legs of dolls; how in every house he entered he found dead and dying, and some who had become idiotic from hunger; how a father was seen trailing his two dead children along the road by a rope, to bury them; how the poor in general were buried in trap or slide coffins out of which they were dropped into the common grave by unhooking the bottom; how the remains of some less fortunate were eaten by the dogs or rats, and over others their houses were burned as a speedy method of giving them interment. Nature's remedy for the disease of over population was sharp and effectual.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### THE REBELLION OF 1848.

Ingratitude to England—Account of it—The landlords' policy—Dislike of the people to emigrate—Revolutionary movement abroad and in England—The abortiveness of rebellion in Ireland not a sign of happiness and freedom—Manner of the Protestants to the Roman Catholics—Events of '48 in Ireland.

WE have before observed that the peasantry of Ireland always, as they were taught, blamed England for every misfortune. They were not grateful for the vast expenditure of English money by which they had been rescued from death in the three preceding years. They neither cared nor inquired where the money had come from. It is their custom to believe that Government possesses the power of averting all evil; that it is, or ought to be, a sort of Providence; but that being the English Government, it does not care what becomes of their country, and instead of exercising its power to avert, purposely brings calamities on Ireland in order to prevent her from growing too strong. To English readers this may appear incredible; but we can testify to its being the universal creed of the poor, in Munster, Leinster, and Connaught. It may be conceived that the darkness in which such a theory could obtain must have been very thick; and yet strange to say, it is almost as firmly held to-day, as it was twenty years ago, although great progress has been made in education, and the children in Irish national schools are considerably more intelligent than children of the same class in the national schools of England. The Irish peasantry, generally speaking, are superior in intelligence to the English; and have none of that brutalism which, among the latter, is such a growing characteristic. But, notwithstanding their intelligence, they still throw the blame of every misfortune on England; perhaps rather shutting their eyes, than being blind to the good intentions of the English le-



gislation and English people. They do not wish to forgive, or to make friends with England; and are at pains to mistake her motives, and believe in her instrumentality of evil. Twenty years ago the belief was of a more genuine kind, and more satisfactory to good haters of the dominant country; instead of considering themselves under obligations for the public and private relief which had been lavished upon them in their distress, they thought of the half million who had died, and they cursed England. Who made the country so poor that the whole wealth and means of the people of it consisted of the crop in the ground, and when that crop failed all was gone? Who had wrung from them the little they made of their land, above what barely maintained them in life; and thus prevented their having anything laid by against the dark day? Whose commercial policy had ruined Irish manufacture, and left them wholly dependent on the soil, to a degree to which no civilized nation was ever dependent upon it before?—Who, at the same time, invested the ownership of the soil in English landlords, who should take care that the rent (spent in England) should always rise to the lips of the farmers, just permitting them to exist? Who, to go back further, had several times tried to destroy their nation by massacre, and had failed, just as all the attempts to extinguish the nation of the Jews were defeated by God? Who, after taking from them everything, had attempted to take from them even the consolation of being taught and prepared for a future life; a consolation it is never wise to take from the miserable? In that alone English policy had failed. She had inflated herself with riches by sucking Ireland; and to contemplate the greatness of the one country was to see of how much the other had been plundered. We are stating the views, it must be remembered, of an ignorant peasantry. They did not thank England for saving seven million lives, but cursed her for letting five hundred thousand perish. Why should they be grateful to the robber for giving them back enough to keep body and soul together? Now, however, a new and terrible grievance arose—out of the policy that was adopted to avert a repetition of the famine. It may be viewed in the most opposite lights; in some cases it was promoted with the most philanthropic objects, but often out of the purest selfishness.\* It has resulted in a strange political phenomenon, which has perplexed and frightened our statesmen, and of which it cannot be said what it will grow to, or what dimensions it may ultimately assume. We must consider it as one of the causes which put the Irish mind into the frame, to be worked on by the adventurous leaders who are always forthcoming when there is insurrection in the air. The famine itself was not the most excruciating suffering the Irish people were destined to undergo. For when they had nearly passed through the cloud, and a little dubious sunshine began to gleam on them again, they found that the land of Ireland had to a great extent changed hands—their old masters were ruined with themselves—and the year following the alienation of the

\* Mr. Trench adopted the expedient we speak of on an immense scale at Kenmare; not, however, with the occupiers of the land, but with those who had first gone into the workhouse. In this instance there was scarcely an alternative; and both Mr. Trench and his employer, Lord Lansdowne, were actuated by the highest motives.

soil was completed; the establishment of the Encumbered Estates Court, to facilitate the transfer of property, and empowered to give a parliamentary title (the value of which we shall see), rendered the change of ownership rapid and wholesale. Men of money found they could acquire properties in Ireland at nine years purchase which—supposing the same tenants were to be continued in possession, recovering slowly, and unable to pay rent for a considerable time, nay requiring help to stock and sow their land with seed,—would have been equivalent to fourteen or fifteen years' purchase of property, let to solvent tenants. But the new landlords had no sentimental feeling about the old tenantry; they had no idea that their money should be dead for so many years, during which the bad and often ineradicable habit would have grown up of paying no rent, as a considerable addition actually was made to the constitutional laxity of an Irishman's notions upon this subject, by the short passage of the famine itself. They therefore looked at the situation like practical men; and saw that the famine (they would not say, unfortunately,) had not been permitted to do its work, and that the land in which they had invested their capital was encumbered with a beggared tenantry. By turning them out they perceived they would swamp themselves with poor-rates, which during the famine years in many localities where the population was dense, mounted high above the valuation. On the other hand, by leaving them in possession they would have no rents for several years,—if ever. Perceiving that in one way or other they must be out of pocket, the new landlords hit upon a happy expedient. In fact, it was to meet such cases that the New World was given to the Old; and by shipping off their tenantry to America, they not only got rid of the most unwieldy sort of encumbrance, but seemed, with a due regard to their own interests, to be performing an act of extreme generosity. And so they were rid of them at one quarter of what it would have cost to keep them on the farm or in the workhouse; and when they had landed the unfortunate people, broken down by the sufferings they had undergone in Ireland, and many of them little fitted to fight the rough battle that must be fought in a new country, without any capital to commence life upon, but broken hearts and enfeebled hands, the new proprietors, who were, perhaps in the majority of cases, old agents, set about consolidating farms, and substituted pasture for corn, and cattle for men. Those who have seen the emigrant ships tearing the hearts of the Irish from the soil to which they seemed to grow, and have heard the terrible cries, that move men to tears, of those in whom there seemed to be a dividing of the spirit itself, will comprehend how the Irish underwent a severer trial when the famine was over, than when it began or while it lasted. The regime which was instituted by the new landlords was soon adopted by those who remained of the old; and who, if they did not adopt it, underwent considerable odium as non-improving landlords, men without public spirit, who were raising the rates upon their neighbours. And so the result of the famine was an enforced deportation which had to external observers the appearance of a flight from the shores of Ireland of two millions of its inhabitants. Then those who were gone sent for those who remained; the old and feeble Jacob went down into Egypt, where Joseph had been



sold. The flight became an orderly retreat, and for a while the population which had been rising before the famine at the rate of 760,000 in every ten years, now went on steadily losing (though not to the same extent, of course, sinking) at the rate of a quarter of a million a-year, a portion of the enormous overflow remaining in England.

After the famine—in the first pangs of this process—followed the events of 1848. The revolutions on the continent, as in the end of the 18th century, found a feeble imitation in Ireland, unreal as a reflection. One of those mysterious impulses which come at intervals, as if under some occult law, and disturb every nation, and against the mischief of which the only safeguard is perfect freedom, shook down the throne of Louis Philippe, and temporarily overturned even the chair of Saint Peter. In England it was otherwise. The chartist explosion was harmless; it made a report, but did not overthrow or even shake any institution of the country. The capability of Anglo-Saxons for revolution, when revolution is needed to relieve them from pressure, has received several illustrations; and the harmlessness of the ebullition of 1848 satisfactorily tested our freedom, and proved that our social system, though artificial, is secure, and that we have realized liberty without license. The three attempts at rebellion which have taken place in Ireland, in the present century, might be supposed to point to a similar conclusion, and to demonstrate the unreality of Irish grievances. The peasantry have rather played at insurrection than attempted that desperate expedient in earnest. To forge pikes, and make havoc of the young plantations for pike handles, to obtain firearms by robbing the houses of those who were privileged to keep them, and to strip the roofs of lead wherewith to cast bullets,—to drill and march along unfrequented roads at the dead of night, have constituted the exciting and somewhat dangerous amusements of the Irish peasantry for the last half century. It may be assumed, that it was more with a view to relieve the tedium of life, that this lively and excitable people, dwelling by “a melancholy ocean,” and having no field in which their genius might exercise itself, thus played the game of insurrection; finding out from time to time, when it was pushed too far, how little they were in earnest. Whenever they have been urged by their leaders into overt acts of rebellion, they have been found deficient in that desperate resolution which makes rebellion formidable; and yet it is well known, that as a nation, they are not only brave, but pugnacious. Should we be justified then, in concluding that, as in the case of the chartist outbreak, the unreal rebellions of Ireland only demonstrate the real contentment, sound freedom, and general prosperity of that country? That the Irish have no sincere hatred of England, no genuine belief in their own grievances, no veritable dislike of eviction, and no unfeigned poverty? That in reality Ireland is perfectly free, and perfectly happy? As a matter of history the Irish have not been free, in the English sense of the word; it has arisen from their fault that such has been the case; but the fact remains the same, that they have not shared the freedom of the nations with which they are connected. We do not now speak of Catholic disabilities, but of Coercion bills, Peace Preservation Acts, Unlawful Assembly Acts, Suspensions of Habeas

Corpus. During a considerable proportion of the time that has elapsed since the Union, the Irish have been deprived of this latter safeguard of liberty. What parliament since then has not passed some bill to limit Irish freedom? How much space is occupied in the records of parliamentary debates by the discussion of measures for the repression of Irish agitation? It was either to deprive Irishmen of the right of carrying arms, or of the privilege of holding public meetings, one of the most cherished rights of Englishmen, or of co-operating together for the attainment of political objects, or it was to renew the old curfew law in the nineteenth century, and render liable to arrest any one found abroad between sunset and sunrise. We do not blame the legislature for those measures; but at the same time we deny that the Irish have been in the enjoyment of that perfect freedom which makes rebellion impossible. It is only impossible to escape, where there is no restraint; but no one with candour can assert that this has been the case in Ireland. Nor have such measures as we have alluded to, been equally applied to the Protestant section, as there was no necessity they should; but still it was aggravating to the Roman Catholic, that the law in his case should assume him to be guilty, and in the case of the Protestant, should assume him to be innocent. The latter, in a proclaimed district, was left his arms as a matter of course; but the former could not shoot a crow on his farm. But this was not what rankled in the hearts of the peasantry so much as more "sentimental" grievance. They were perfectly conscious that Protestant landlords, and even Protestants in their own rank of life, instinctively regarded them as an inferior race; and what was even more intolerable, they themselves were conscious of the inferiority. The self-confident, contemptuous, bullying Englishman—in Ireland as in India—never fails to make the native population conscious of his physical superiority, and hate him heartily on account of it. Denial blends with and embitters the admission; for while in energy and force of character he is unrivalled, in wit, tact, and sentiment, he is comparatively deficient. Hence, it has not been a want of the feelings which arouse nations into rebellion, but a disbelief in the possibility of rebelling successfully, that has made Irish insurrections so feeble and heartless. The lion of rebellion lies down cowed, at the voice and look of established authority. Centuries of stern repression have taken from the Irish race all remnant of self-confidence, so far, at least, as regards its ancient oppressor. Belief in itself, not belief in its wrongs, is what the race is deficient in; and we should be very much mistaken in ascribing the ludicrous failure of Mr. Smith O'Brien's rebellion to the same cause that made the chartist attempt unsuccessful in England. The truth is, that the organized system of assassination which has so long prevailed in Ireland, and this miserable attempt at rebellion, were different forms of the same disease. The former is a slavish kind of rebellion. The Irishman who shoots his landlord from behind a hedge is more of a rebel than a murderer. The same desperate feelings exist in both cases; but while in one, the insurmountable sense of subjugation and inferiority render them incapable, in the other they produce desperate deeds.

It had been prophesied long before by Lord Althorp, that the Repeal agitation would culminate in a rebellion, because it would become



evident after a time that repeal could not be obtained by constitutional means. There had been now for some years a party growing up calling itself the "Young Ireland" party, which proclaimed its intention of taking by force what was denied to importunity. The most prominent of the young Irishmen was Mr. William Smith O'Brien, one of the members representing the county of Limerick in parliament, a gentleman of considerable property and influence, sprung from the ancient family of the Barons Inchiquin. Mr. O'Brien had nothing in common with the ordinary type of Irish agitator, but an enthusiastic devotion to the genius of his country, a feeling of her wrongs, and a belief in the possibility of shaking off the yoke which she has borne so impatiently for seven centuries. The learning, refinement, and extreme amiability and sense of honour which he possessed, were not the best qualifications for a revolutionary leader, and probably the somewhat ludicrous termination of the movement was partly attributable to the unfitness of the man. We do not say that the insurrection could have been under any circumstances successful; but it would undoubtedly have been attended with more serious results if it had been under less amiable generalship. The minor leaders did not make up for the deficiencies of their chief. Several were young barristers of considerable talent unrecognised by attorneys. The bar in Ireland works on half or a quarter time, and men without interest, unless their abilities are very striking, are not, for many years, able to make a livelihood by their profession. The gentlemen we speak of found a vent for their eloquence and discontent in certain seditious journals, and were insensibly converted into conspirators, partly by their own rhetoric, and partly by the necessity of the situation in which they had thus placed themselves. Some of the rebels of 1848 lived to win name and fame, out of Ireland. Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee, for instance, attained a distinguished position in the dominion of Canada, and became a useful and loyal subject. In after years, when, as a prosperous colonial statesman, he visited Ireland, he did not fear to tell his countrymen that he no longer believed in his old dreams of an Ireland independent of England; and that it was by imitating the sober industry of the latter country Irish grievances could be removed. For this change in his opinions, and for his decided opposition to Fenianism, he was assassinated upon his own doorstep, by what the famous mayor of Cork might have called "another noble Irishman." Thomas Meagher, who was also distinguished among the Young Irishmen, achieved a military reputation in America during the civil war. We shall briefly sketch this group in our memoirs; and only desire to indicate that they were men of some respectability; and that this probably prevented the rebellion from being attended with worse results. The hopes of assistance from France, which prevailed at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, were again awakened by the substitution of the republic for the monarchy. Mr. O'Brien and some others went upon a deputation to Paris to congratulate the French nation on this change, but did not meet with an encouraging reception from M. Ledru Rollin. We may here mention a circumstance which Mr. Thackeray has commemorated in his ballad entitled "the battle of Limerick." The Limerick Sarsfield Confederation Club having invited

to a soiree the gentlemen who had composed the deputation to France, the house where they were assembled in Thomas Street, was attacked by the Old Ireland or "moral force" faction; and it was only by the timely interposition of military and police that the advocates of physical force were rescued from the vigorous arguments of those who depended on peaceful means and constitutional procedure. "First blood" was drawn from Mr. O'Brien's nose; the other leaders taking advantage of a back door ran for their lives, and the citadel of the Sarsfield Confederation was reduced to a complete ruin. It was of course said that the reactionary movement originated from the Castle, but whether this was so or not, the circumstance excited considerable amusement. Mr. O'Brien resigned his seat in parliament, and probably his indignation at the affront made him long for an opportunity of showing that the projected revolution was no laughable matter. Both by public speeches, and through the organs of sedition, the people were exhorted to arm. The cheap press, which has done so much to enlighten and educate the English populace, has been an agent of pure mischief in Ireland. We do not object to its opinions so much as to its unfair and ill-conditioned tone. Its teaching has been full of gall; and we have scarcely ever seen a charitable sentiment in the popular papers to which we allude. We venture to assert with the utmost confidence, that the best means of quieting Ireland and of being in a position to remedy her grievances, would be not to prosecute the printers, but to give the police power to seize all seditious prints. This, without making martyrs, would put an effectual stop to the evil. Napoleonic government is needed in Ireland; external grandeur and generosity and a strong hand. In 1848, the Nation, the United Irishman, and the Irish Felon, besides a number of provincial papers, were all pouring out their bitter waters. At last, when they directly called on the people to rise in arms, and, in fact, declared war on England, the government determined to make an example of Mr. Mitchell of the United Irishman; he was accordingly tried and convicted, and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. The Young Irelanders thus lost a man who would have been one of their most active leaders, when the time should have come to drop the pen and seize the pike. An action against Mr. O'Brien for seditious speaking was not so successful—a matter more to be regretted on his own account than as unfortunate for the government. Of course everyone was now prepared for an outbreak, and if it had been really formidable, the precautions adopted would have proved amply sufficient. The military and naval forces had a thorough mastery of the country within and without. Sir Charles Napier with the fleet watched over the coast; the Rhadamanthus was moored in the Suir opposite Waterford, and it was notified to the corporation, the majority in which was not remarkable for loyalty, that the city would be bombarded should such a measure be found necessary. The handsome quay a mile long, lined with the shops and warehouses of the aldermen and councillors, presented a fine mark to the gunners; and it was promised that one house which in an exuberance of national feeling its owner had painted green, should be the first to receive their fire. The wooden bridge over the river, forming at the time the only connection between the counties of Kilkenny and Water-



ford, was to be blown up in case it should be desirable to cut off the communication between the insurgents of those two particularly disaffected counties. Probably it was owing to the presence of this ship and a large military force, that there was no disturbance in Waterford beyond a scuffle upon the bridge, in which Meagher is said to have been concerned. Similar precautions were taken at Limerick, where the river Shannon enabled the government to take naval possession of the town. Cork was overawed by a flotilla of steamers, and bodies of military and police showed themselves about the country. It is generally believed in the north of Ireland, and we have received it on good authority, that the government was prepared to entrust the loyally disposed people with arms; and that a vessel of war lying off the fishing village of Ardglass, on the coast of the county of Down, was freighted with a large supply to be distributed by the magistrates in case of emergency. The fact that Ulster was almost denuded of troops lends probability to this statement; but at the same time, arming the loyal against the disloyal is a desperate expedient, contrary to the policy of both Whig and Tory governments in Ireland; and if Lord Clarendon had it in contemplation in 1848, it shows that he greatly overestimated the danger. Notwithstanding that we have been repeatedly informed of it in the north, on what might be considered good authority, we are inclined to believe that the government can have had no such intention, but that a popular supposition assumed the form of a fact.

It is within our own knowledge, that in 1867 the Government of the day distinctly refused to place arms in the hands of a section of the people, or to allow the local authorities the invidious right of distinguishing between the loyal and disloyal. The line would practically have been drawn between Catholics and Protestants; and the former would naturally have been justly irritated by the assumption of their disaffection implied in refusing to intrust them with arms. The operation of the Prevention of Crime Act was injurious enough in this respect; for while in proclaimed districts the Protestant gentry and clergy and their dependents of that religion were allowed to retain their arms, the Roman Catholics, almost without exception, were deprived of them, unless when they were placed in concealment (which was very generally the case); but the intention of the authorities was manifested notwithstanding.

The Government, having procured a suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, resolved on arresting the principal conspirators; but warned of this intention, they left Dublin, and dispersed over the country to their several commands. In the county of Kilkenny, a midnight march was made by a small body of insurgents upon Grannagh bridge, which it was intended to blow up, in order to delay the movement of troops operating from Waterford. Their preparations were not complete, however, when the morning broke; and the sight of a magistrate who lived close by, riding out at the head of a small body of police put them instantly to flight. Similar midnight marches were made in other parts of the country, but without any definite object, except to make the people engaged in them believe that they were actually in rebellion against the Government; they vanished like ghosts with the break of

day. The peasantry stimulated their own excitement by these movements, and kept the Protestant landlords and clergy in considerable trepidation. We can remember the midnight warning that the whole country was up, and that an attack was about to be made; the preparations for defence; the loading of guns; the great stones that were ready to be cast down as at Thebez, on the heads of the assailants; the scouts sent out to ascertain if the enemy were approaching; the measured tramp of several hundred men marching through the dark, and the ring of horses' hoofs, as if the leaders were mounted;—morning, and nobody the worse; no sign of the ghostly army that had passed in the night; the fields peaceful and uninjured, and the people going to their work as usual. Meanwhile large rewards were offered for the apprehension of the leaders,—£500 for Mr. O'Brien, £300 for each of the others,—M'Manus, Doheny, O'Gorman, M'Gee and Reilly; and numerous arrests were made in Dublin and elsewhere. On the 27th of July, the startling announcement appeared in the Times, that the whole of the South of Ireland was in rebellion, and a number of details were given in the condensed phraseology with which the telegraph has made us familiar, representing the insurgents as almost everywhere victorious, and the military either beaten or refusing to act. Happily there was little or no foundation for this tremendous piece of news. It was true that Mr. O'Brien had met his lieutenants, Meagher and Dillon, at the town of Enniscorthy in the county of Wexford, and these gentlemen had set out upon an outside "jaunting car," amid the enthusiastic cheers of the people assembled in the street, upon the conquest of Ireland. After pursuing their course through Graigue, Kilkenny, Callen, Carrick-on-Suir, and Killenaule—in each of which places they harangued the people, and appealed to them not to allow them to be arrested—they at last reached the town of Mullinahone, and there the campaign really began. Mr. Terence M'Manus joined them in a green uniform, and they all assumed green caps with gold bands, such as Mr. Daniel O'Connell had been accustomed to wear at his monster meetings. Besides these gold and green caps, of which we have seen a specimen, and which bore a strong resemblance in size and shape to crowns, the leaders were dressed in a sort of military costume, and carried about their persons a profusion of pistols. Mr. O'Brien was described as marching at the head of the advanced guard of thirty men, with a pike seven or eight feet long upon his shoulder, a pistol in his hand, and three pistols stuck in his breast. The garrison of Mullinahone consisted of six policemen, and when the insurgents appeared before the barrack and demanded the surrender of their arms, the door was open, and their muskets were upstairs; nevertheless constable Williams valiantly refused to give them up, and being allowed an hour to deliberate, they marched out with their arms and whatever are the honours of war, to join the force at Cashel of the Kings. Thither,—though it was the place where the sovereigns of Munster were crowned,—Mr. O'Brien did not follow them; but continued his march towards the county of Limerick, with about three thousand men, all of whom were armed with guns, scythes, pikes, or pitchforks. On their way to the field where the fate of Ireland was to be decided, only two incidents marked their progress; the first was meeting a detachment of the 8th



hussars, consisting of forty-five men, under Captain Longmore. The insurgents, on being informed by their scouts of the approach of the military, threw up barricades across the road, and prepared to dispute their passage; but upon learning that they had no hostile orders or intentions, the barricades were opened by command of Mr. O'Brien, who, on this, as on other occasions, showed a humane desire to avoid bloodshed, and the troops proceeded on their way; the occurrence was of course represented as an insurgent victory. The second incident, and the only real success which they achieved, was the capture of one policeman, whom Mr. O'Brien first threatened to shoot, and then obliged with his own horse, lest he should be wearied by the march. And now they drew near to Ballingarry, and fell in with a body of constabulary, numbering fifty, under the command of sub-inspector Trant. This small force, instead of surrendering at discretion, as called upon to do, retired into a substantial farmhouse which stood a little aside from the high road; and having rendered the windows bullet proof by mattresses, they awaited the attack of the insurgents. The assault commenced; a lively but harmless fire was opened upon the house, and returned with effect by the police. Mr. O'Brien, who was not deficient in the personal courage of a gentleman, made a rush, with a number of his followers, to reach the door; it was necessary to cross a garden of cabbages; and among those inglorious vegetables the insurgent leader was brought to the ground by a slight wound upon the knee. He was immediately carried to the rear; and his followers, extremely damped by the resistance they had encountered, withdrew to a safer distance. It was towards the end of the day that, like Blucher's army after Waterloo, another body of police was seen approaching under the command of sub-inspector Cox. After a few shots the insurgents dispersed in flight, and the police remained in possession of the field. The latter suffered no loss, and that on the side of the people could not be ascertained; but probably amounted to fifteen or twenty. Mr. O'Brien was captured a few days after at Thurles, in the county Tipperary, by a railway guard who recognised him; the other leaders were not more fortunate in making their escape, and they were all tried and sentenced to terms of transportation. A remission of his sentence soon restored Mr. O'Brien to his family and estates; the others were either pardoned or broke their parole and escaped to the United States of America. Thus ended the Irish rebellion of 1848; the country on the whole was the better for it; and the land had comparative rest for many years.

---

## CHAPTER XI.

### TENANT RIGHT.

State of the people—So called extermination—Demand for Tenant right—Peasantry prefer Assassination—Insincerity of Parliament—Sir W. Somerville's and Lord J. Russell's bills—Mr. Napier's code of land laws—Serjeant Shee's bills—English view—Mr. Cardwell's measure—Lord Naas's—Its merits—Radical schemes—Fixity of Tenure—The Church bill takes precedence—Liberal reticence—Reason.

To understand the Land Question of Ireland we must remember its

history; and for this reason we shall briefly recapitulate former statements. We have already alluded to the establishment of the Encumbered Estates Court, which took place in 1849. By its operation a great portion of the land of Ireland changed owners; not a little fell into the hands of agents; some was bought by speculators, and scarcely a tithe remained with the old proprietors. The new landlords found the only way to relieve their estates of a mass of pauperism, which did, and would for a time, have made them unprofitable, was to go on clearing off the people to America; this being much cheaper than paying for them in the workhouse. We have already described and explained the beginning of the great emigration. It began by being compulsory; but as time went on it became self-acting. The emigrants sent for their sisters, brothers, and friends; the chain of emigration continued to draw. At home the blight returned from autumn to autumn, but still with equal pertinacity from spring to spring, the farmers sowed their potatoes in almost undiminished quantities, and thus instead of retrieving their fortunes, got deeper in debt to their landlords, and less able to do justice to the land. Some at last ceased to cultivate it, and in the west of Ireland we remember seeing many farms under a flourishing crop of weeds—either because the occupiers had no seed to plant, or in order to escape the payment of poor-rates. Had they at once given up the culture of the potato, many of those who failed to do so might have regained a solvent position. But Indian corn flour, with its resemblance to sawdust, was disliked by the peasantry, who longed for their accustomed food—and each year they trusted to the chance of the blight having passed away. In Connaught, they seemed at last to lose all power to help themselves, or to contend with their misfortunes; but though the roof had rotted and partly fallen in, though the cowsheds were empty, and the “haggard” had not a stack of corn in it, and the fields were lying waste, still they clung to the land. We can remember, that in those days there were apparently no young people to be seen; the whole population was reduced to decrepitude; boys and girls looked like old men and women; the very infants appeared aged and weazenened. What was to be done with a peasantry reduced to this dreadful condition? To send them away to a land of plenty seemed to be an act of mercy, but it was not so regarded. They adhered desperately to the land which would no longer support them, like a child clinging to the breast of a dead mother. Under the circumstances, the landlords thought they were doing the best in forcibly tearing them away from it. We believe they might have done otherwise, and voluntary emigration would have afforded sufficient relief; they might have employed the farmers to work their own farms, giving them seed, and paying them wages, and the excess of the production above the outlay. The Legislature was willing to supply capital in the shape of loans for such purposes; but a rougher and readier method was preferred. They might have adopted a restorative treatment; but instead of making the attempt, they did nothing, until it was too late for remedial measures. Then they saw nothing better to do, than to deport the people of the soil to America. They offered, on condition of their giving up possession of their farms, to remit the arrears of rent, which the tenantry had no means of paying. The popular feeling was, that though legally



due, those arrears were not due in justice; because while the land produced nothing, it was worth nothing, and instead of owing rent, they considered themselves to have a claim for compensation for the capital they had embarked and lost in the soil; the soil having failed to fulfil the engagement understood in taking it, that it should bring forth its increase. Little gratitude, therefore, was felt for the remission of what could not be recovered, and from the tenant's point of view was not owed. Nor was the passage money which the landlord supplied received with any degree of thankfulness, because they knew it was only given to put them off the rates, on which their support would otherwise have been a tremendous burden. The bitter alternative was accepted when they could no longer resist; and they quitted their land with an anguish, which has no parallel in history, save in that of the Jews departing into captivity. The Irish emigration has been called an exodus; but only those who have witnessed it can judge how inappropriately it is compared to the joyful deliverance out of Egypt. To such as had a direct tie to the soil, the parting from Ireland was most bitter; and it will be seen from a comparison of two statistical facts how largely the emigrants consisted of the farming class; in counties where the population sank altogether but fifteen or twenty per cent., the average size of the farms which had formerly been about ten acres, rose to twenty, or in some counties thirty acres. We may also adduce in illustration of the great clearance of the cultivators, the ground upon which Lord John Russell considered it necessary in 1850 to pass a reform bill for Ireland, establishing a uniform £8 rating franchise in counties and boroughs, that the constituency had declined from 208,000 to 72,000. It became a settled policy of the landlords to get rid, so far as they could, of the old tenants, to consolidate farms, and introduce new blood. With this latter object, they offered every inducement to English and Scotch farmers, with capital and agricultural knowledge, to settle on their property. The new tenants, who were treated with great distinction by landlord and agent, each of them swallowed up the farms and homesteads of ten or twenty Irishmen, now scattered through the United States; and, as if this was not sufficient to secure the hatred of the people, the labouring classes were set in opposition to them by the introduction of steam ploughs, reaping, threshing, and mowing machines. Thus bad blood grew worse; the policy of the landlords gave rise to a policy of the tenants. The power of the former might be described as like the government of the Czars, a despotism limited by assassination. An organized system of murder grew up, and operated as a check upon eviction. The landlords exterminated the tenants; the tenants endeavoured to exterminate the landlords. Tenant right became the great question of Ireland; mutual confidence was destroyed, and the guarantee of a law was demanded. The successor of the Catholic Association and the Repeal Association was the Tenant Right League. The fearful expedient of the Ribbon Society was not accepted by the better classes of Irishmen as a satisfactory mode of settling the question; but they saw that it would go on being practised until rendered unnecessary by a legal substitute. No measure could be adopted that would stop the system being deliberately carried out by the Irish people, and against which the

Government was absolutely helpless, but one making the relations of landlord and tenant so defined and fast, that there could be no room for injustice, or the suspicion of wrong. Hence the desire for a Tenant Right bill grew earnest among intelligent Irishmen on the popular side, in the corporations, chambers of commerce, and boards of guardians. No tremendous popular agitation, however, arose for it; because the peasantry then, as now, relied more upon the blunderbuss; this was such a simple argument, and there was no doubt about its being both heard and felt. It was not necessary to suppress the Tenant Right League, as it had been necessary to suppress the movement for Repeal, lest it should become irresistible. There was no danger of its raising a storm like that by which the Duke of Wellington was intimidated and Catholic Emancipation was carried. The Leaguers were allowed to do their worst, because though their agitation concerned the one political question, about which the peasantry of Ireland were then, and are now really interested, the corporations and Poor-law boards had it almost all to themselves. By them, and perhaps by the people, a moderate measure of Tenant right would have been accepted then, and the question might have been settled in its infancy without any great sacrifice on the part of the landlords. Such a measure received the sanction of almost every party; it was recommended by committees; frequently introduced into parliament; at one time it struggled from the lower House to the upper; anon it came down from the upper to the lower; but somehow it never passed. It would answer no purpose to go through all the bills that were brought in both by governments and by independent members to settle this question; but still without result, except to convince the peasantry that the blunderbuss was the right weapon, a dark night the time, and a lonely road the place to vindicate the rights of the tenant. In reading through debates in Hansard, we feel the utter insincerity that pervades them—the want of that earnestness which the subject demanded, considered from whatever point—whether as a landlord's question or a tenant's. Angry gleams appear from time to time of the real feeling of parliament; as for instance, when Lord Palmerston exclaimed, that tenant's right was landlord's wrong; and the true spirit of the house burst forth in vehement applause. At another time, when one of the Irish law officers of a conservative government said, that he did not know what was meant by the "Land question," the concealed indignation with which the subject is always discussed by the landlord parliament flashed out in a loud cheer. It was complained by Irish members that half the house rose, and the benches on both sides were left almost empty when this vital question was debated; that contemptuous wonder was expressed in the lobbies why the Irish members were always forcing it on parliament,—and what right their constituents had to be different from the rest of the world, in being unable to come to amicable agreements with their landlords. We can scarcely wonder that the peasant farmers of Ireland put little confidence in parliaments. Sir William Somerville introduced bills upon the subject seven times, in the years 1835, 1836, 1843, 1845, 1848, 1850, and 1852. Their principle was to protect improving tenants from being evicted without compensation for their improvements. Lord Derby's bill in 1845 contained the same principle. The measure



proposed by Sir W. Somerville, in conjunction with Lord John Russell, provided a system of arbitration as to whether the proposed improvements should be carried out; and, if the tenant should be evicted, arbitration as to the amount of compensation to be paid him. In the bill of 1848, there was a cumbrous reference from arbitrators to umpires, and from umpires to assistant barristers; but in that of 1850 an inspector of improvements was made to do the whole work. In 1852, Mr. Napier brought forward four bills, which contained a perfect code of law to regulate the relations of landlord and tenant. The Land Improvement bill authorized the landlords to borrow money for improvements sanctioned by the Board of Trade; and provided that even where, as very generally happens in Ireland, they had only a life interest in their estates, they might burden them with a charge of £7 10s., during 22 years, for every £100 borrowed. By the Leasing Powers bill, corporations, etc., could give leases binding those who should succeed them, and promoting improvements on the same terms as in the first bill. The third, the Tenant's Improvement Compensation bill proposed compensation by time—compensatory periods in which to work out the value of the improvements; but the principle of money compensation was thought preferable, and substituted in the bill; the tenant, however, being only entitled to compensation for visible improvements, such as houses, gates, and fences. This measure, essential to the whole scheme, was rejected by the House of Lords; but a clause relating to fixtures was introduced into the fourth measure of the series, viz., the Landlord and Tenant Consolidation bill. This, and the bill enabling corporations to grant leases, on returning to the Commons, were considered worthless without the bill relating to compensation, and accordingly were not proceeded with that session; but in 1855, Mr. Serjeant Shee, a very earnest advocate of tenant right, reintroduced the latter measure. His proposal was, that whether the tenancy terminated by eviction, or of the tenant's own freewill, he should, on its termination, be able to recover compensation for unexhausted improvements. This principle was accepted over and over again; it was assented to so early as 1847 by Sir Robert Peel on one side, and Sir George Grey on the other. Lord Derby's ministries were deeply dyed in the principle, and no party or section of a party but was committed to it; but whether we are to ascribe it to the legislative incapacity of Parliament, or the extraordinary difficulty of embodying the principle on which all were unanimous in an Act that would work, nothing came of the travail of the Legislature session after session, but wind and confusion. The tenants saw their rights admitted, but not secured to them by law; and the only effect of the labour bestowed upon the subject in the two houses, was to show them how good their cause was, and how completely its vindication must depend on themselves. The question had become a part of the furniture of the halls at Westminster; those were halcyon days, good or evil, when our legislators took things easily; and this matter of paying the tenants for their improvements was one about which they were least of all in haste, because they themselves were the persons who would have to pay. English landlords objected to making a precedent in Ireland; a demand might be created among their

own tenantry which did not yet exist. Tenant right, one day, might become an English question should any great calamity happen to the farming interests of England. Then it would perhaps be necessary for them, as it had been for the Irish landlords, to dispossess a ruined tenantry and send them to the uninhabited parts of the earth, in order that landlord interests might not suffer. Immediately would arise the demand for compensation, which, if it had been conceded in Ireland, would be most difficult to resist in England. Hence there was a firm resolve that no real measure of tenant right should be conceded; but the policy was adopted of discussing the question from session to session until it should grow stale to the country; and the Irish members particularly were bound to be very earnest in its behalf. At last, however, it was considered necessary for the credit of the house to do something, which should amount to nothing. This feat was successfully performed in 1860. We do not say that its promoters intended the measure to be nugatory; but those who really knew Ireland and the Irish, must have been aware that it would prove so. Mr. Cardwell's Tenure and Improvement of Land bill, gave a right of veto to the landlord which alone was sufficient to nullify its effect; because Irish landlords are not generally overburdened with money, and would inevitably object to anything for which they might at any future time be called upon to pay. It would come in the end to the improvements being made with their money; because though found in the first instance by the tenants, the landlords according to this bill would have to reimburse them for their outlay.

It has never been the custom in Ireland for the landlord to improve; the tenant did so at his own discretion and risk; and the Irish landlord reaped where he had not sown, and gathered where he had not strawed. Rather than have this charge which would make it a very expensive matter to dispossess a tenant always ready to rise up against him, he would much prefer that no improvement should be made upon his property. A landlord who consented to improvements, and had not ready money at command to pay for them whenever it should be his will and pleasure to take up the land, would in effect have given his tenant perpetuity of tenure. He would have deprived himself of that delightful power which a landlord ought to possess over the well-being of his fellow-creatures, the power of plunging them from happiness and comfort into ruin and misery. His political influence depends on this power; in Ireland it rests upon no other basis. Hence, if the act of 1860 had any operation at all, it would have been to put a stop to improvements; for, being only prospective, it had no effect in giving compensation for improvements past—on the contrary, it clearly excluded such compensation, and thus despoiled the tenant of his, as yet, unlegalized claim; and while deciding the case against him, promised that if it ever arose again it should be decided in his favour. The landlord was armed with power to prevent himself from being rendered liable for the future, and his past liabilities were overlooked; while the tenant was barred from recovering on the claims which he actually possessed, and in exchange was given the right to recover on claims that he could never acquire, except by the permission of one who was certain to refuse it. The



method of obtaining compensation was beautifully clear, and the only drawback was that it was never likely to come into requisition. In fact the bill was a mere landlord subterfuge; and a return of the claims made for compensation under its provisions would show that it had no operation whatever; it was born dead, and never drew a breath. Things therefore remained as they were; the bill received no recognition in Ireland; but it gave the House of Commons a good excuse for refusing to consider the question for several years to come. In 1863 and 1864 it declined to discuss it; a bill having been passed in 1860, it was not reasonable to expect that this settlement should be so soon disturbed, or that fundamental questions affecting the sacred rights of property should be reopened every few years. After the death of Lord Palmerston, however, and when his regime had passed away, events began to take a very grave turn—a cloud appeared in the west; the Halyon days were quite over, and the young Halyons were now flying abroad in rough weather,—Reform and Fenianism being the two most remarkable of the brood. The consequence was, that it was necessary to bring in another Land bill; and this was done by Mr. Fortescue in 1866, and again by Lord Naas in 1867. As the former bill was not essentially different from its predecessors before 1860, we may confine our attention to Lord Naas's measure. It could, from its nature, only be prospective; but so far as it went, it was approved of by the more intelligent portion of the Irish farmers. It recognised the fact that in Ireland the person to effect improvements by the custom of the country is the occupier; and the borrowing power which the Land Improvement Act had given to the proprietor, this Act would have given to the tenant. His course was to memorialize the Commissioners, stating the nature of the proposed improvements, their probable cost, etc., and then the Commissioners were to publish a statement and serve notice on the landlord of what was proposed—and should the proposal be approved of by them, he was only able to put a veto upon farm buildings, roads, and similar improvements, but not upon that class of improvements necessary to make the land productive—such as drainage, subsoiling, etc. The tenant was thus to be enabled, under the authority of the Commissioners, and even in spite of his landlord, to put a charge on the land he held for productive improvements; but it is plain that a tenant could not really act in opposition to his landlord, unless protected from the consequences in a manner Lord Naas's bill did not propose to protect him. At the same time, there would have been less reason why Irish landlords should have objected to have the value of their land increased, and their tenants put in a better position to pay their rents and employ labour that, unemployed, would disquiet the country, when there was no danger of their being called upon themselves to pay down large sums of ready-money to outgoing tenants. This provided for the case of the tenant without capital, enabling him to do by a loan, what would be done by the proprietor in England or Scotland; but if he had himself money or labour to put into the land, he might go through the same process of memorializing, and if his improvements were sanctioned, he could at the end of his tenancy recover their unexhausted value from the Commissioners; and that unexhausted

value would then become a charge upon the land. It is obvious that this was a good and sound measure, and not one that it would have been the interest of the landlords to render inoperative; while it was one at the same time satisfying the justice of the case, so far as the tenants were concerned. True, it only affected future improvements; but we do not believe that there would have been any insuperable objection to making it retrospective. How far the bill would have worked it is difficult to say; simple as its provisions may appear, they might have proved too complicated for the agricultural understanding of Ireland. The Irish are a most intelligent race, but such forms of procedure as this bill involved, would have made it to some extent inoperative. It might fairly have been hoped, however, that custom would have led to a more general appreciation of its provisions. But other matters of policy not having met with acceptance, this bill was withdrawn, as part of a general scheme. It went too far for the Conservative landlords, while it fell equally far short of satisfying advanced liberals. Various plans had been put forward by the radical party, the most remarkable of which were Mr. Mills' and Mr. Bright's. They both considered it necessary to repair the wrong that had been done by wholesale confiscation, and to put the peasantry in large numbers in possession of the soil. The former proposed the division among them of the waste lands, amounting to 3,000,000 acres; while Mr. Bright suggested that the government should buy up the estates of such absentee proprietors as should be willing to sell; and that these estates should be apportioned out to the people in small lots, the purchase money to be repaid by instalments in 35 years. Either of these measures would of course, in its design, only be supplementary to a land tenure and compensation bill; but we cannot help thinking that there is one class of persons who would be strongly opposed to the division of the estates of absentees, not the absentees themselves, but their present tenants. However, the aims of the advanced liberals were evidently beyond what Lord Naas could satisfy; and as the approaching election promised to give them an accession of strength, they were not disposed to accept a compromise, which, looking to this, their opponents had been ready to offer. Although it might have been received as an instalment by the Irish farming interest, nothing short of fixity of tenure would by them be regarded as final. By "fixity of tenure," we mean the tenant's irremovability by his landlord, so long as he should continue to pay the present rent. This contains two elements; one his irremovability whilst he fulfils the terms of the contract,—the other, that he, alone, should have the benefit of the whole increase in the value of property, which the landlord monopolises at present. The latter condition, whatever may be said of the former, would undoubtedly be in the direction of confiscation. We are sure that it never will receive the assent of one house composed mainly, and another composed entirely of landlords. How far the principle of corn-rents which prevails, we believe, in Scotland, and was sanctioned by the Tithe Composition and Church Temporalities Acts in Ireland, might be adopted to solve the difficulty—if difficulty there is—we cannot undertake to say. Certainly, if some principle could be found by which rents would be self-regulating,—and, having first been settled by the



productivity of the land, would then vary with the value of the productions, we fancy it would obviate the discontent that is always caused by an arbitrary increase; and would also afford a guarantee to the landlord that the land should not be run out.

The general election of 1868 called forth some strong declarations on the question from eminent members of the liberal party; and when shortly after they were called upon to fill high offices in a liberal government, those declarations were post-stamped with official authority; whereas (except perhaps in the case of the head of the party) they indicated the opinions not of ministers, but of private individuals. The Irish Church Bill, however, so fully came up to their declarations, that considerable alarm was felt lest the land settlement should be an equally decided embodiment of their views. In Ireland, the belief was general among the peasant farmers, that the land bill would come after the church bill; and would treat the landlords, as the latter measure had proposed to treat the clergy. We have it on the best authority, that there was considerable unwillingness to pay rent in some parts of the country; and a number of agrarian outrages took place in Tipperary and Westmeath, from a determination that the landlords, now that their lease of power had so nearly expired, should not take any advantage of the few months which yet remained. It was felt that this state of things called for a decided expression on the part of the Government, that they had in contemplation no such revolutionary schemes as were attributed to them in Ireland. Several attempts were made both in the Upper and Lower Houses to draw from them such a disclaimer, but without any satisfactory result. The Duke of Somerset, Earl Russell, Earl Grey, and Lord Westbury, all stanch whigs, urged the danger of a reticent attitude; but Earl Granville firmly refused to tie his colleagues down by any pledge, or, as the Marquis of Salisbury rather inappropriately expressed it, himself to "enter the Confessional," as he was invited to do. Probably the silence which the Government chose to observe, arose from the obvious reason, that no agreement had been arrived at in the cabinet. If the only question had been which matter should have the precedence, it might perhaps have been wiser to take the land question first in order; to have passed a moderate measure, if moderate it was to be; and then made up for its deficiency by the more sweeping treatment of the Irish Church. To form a strong ministry, however, it was necessary to go first to that upon which the general election had turned, and the whole liberal party was of one mind; and to leave in abeyance the other great question, upon which there was not the same identity of opinion. That some settlement of the land question should follow was probably stipulated at the formation of Mr. Gladstone's ministry; and it was hoped that when the time should arrive for its solution, those who now were understood to differ, might be able to come to a satisfactory agreement on this difficult subject.\*

\* In a pastoral published by Archbishop Leahy, May 1869, that prelate denied, on behalf of the Roman Catholic clergy, any knowledge of an agrarian conspiracy against the lives and property of the landlords,—asserting that it could not exist without their knowledge, and arguing that "the non-detection of crime is a plain proof of the non-existence of conspiracy." "There was a time," he admitted, when such a conspiracy existed, and as a consequence, the perpetra-

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE FENIANS.

The Irish in America—The civil war—Growth and constitution of Fenianism—Preparations for an outbreak in Ireland—Suspension of the Habeas Corpus act—Arrests—Escape of Stephens—Attacks on Canada—Conduct of the United States government—Intended attack on Chester Castle—Unexpected rising in Kerry—General insurrection—Manchester Rescue—Executions—Alarms in England—Attempted Assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh in Australia—The Clerkenwell Explosion—Release of Fenian convicts—Fenianism smouldering on in Ireland.

FROM the time that the Irish emigrants began to take root in the United States, the history of Ireland may be said to have been, to a certain extent, transferred to America. There a greater Ireland has been rising up—an Ireland not subject to England—an Ireland under the protection of the great Republic, an Ireland cherishing the deadliest hatred against its old oppressor, and trying hard to anticipate the day of vengeance when its protector will no longer restrain it, but will

tors of agrarian crimes were betrayed and brought to justice. We believe this view to a certain extent to be quite correct; Ribbonism, as an organized society, was swallowed up in Fenianism; but the elements of Ribbonism remained when the operation of Fenianism ceased; and although they did not again associate, they became for that reason only the more dangerous; the same principles of action prevailed, and were more recklessly applied by individuals, than when they were carried out by an organization. The same sympathy was extended to, and protected the individual that shielded agents of the society. Spontaneous individual action was a more secure way of carrying out the Ribbon principles than combined proceedings. A conspiracy with a body is far more easily dealt with than a conspiracy without one. Dr. Leahy denied that the expectation of a revolutionary measure to be brought in by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright had any effect in multiplying agrarian outrages; and ascribed the great increase in crimes of this description to the occurrence in the previous year at Ballycohey; and the sympathy with the tenantry, "avowed by the gentry themselves, and echoed in the thunders of the press on both sides of the channel." The transaction alluded to, took place in the summer of 1868, and arose out of an attempt by a Mr. Scully, brother of Mr. Vincent Scully, a popular Irish member, to treat the tenantry of an estate he had just acquired with great injustice and oppression. These people are the descendants of Cromwell's stern troopers, and preserve the hatred of oppression which animated their ancestors. In the face of an enraged multitude, and contrary to the earnest advice of the police who escorted him, Mr. Scully proceeded to serve notices on the farmers of the district; but while entering the first farmstead, a volley was fired from the buildings on either side which had been loopholed for the purpose; Mr. Scully fell, dangerously wounded, and two or three of the police were killed. We have no doubt that this affair did stir the blood of the peasantry; we know what a sensation it made through Ireland; but it would be quite inadequate to account for the prevalence of the lawless spirit to which it unquestionably contributed. That visionary hopes of strong legislation in their favour were entertained by the peasantry, we had ourselves opportunities of perceiving. Earl Russell, in his speech on a motion of inquiry into the state of Ireland, May 13, 1869, suggested another cause of the frequency of agrarian outrages—viz., the suppression of Fenianism; he said that such crimes as the House was engaged in discussing usually followed "from the failure of conspiracies." The peculiar state of the popular mind in Ireland, which resulted in so many murders, was, no doubt, due to a considerable combination of circumstances, rather than to any one.



gladly accept the weapon its hatred will supply. Whether or not it is possible to conciliate this greater Ireland, through the Ireland that remains under our rule, is a question of importance to England; and no doubt the wish to do so forms one of the springs that should to a moderate extent govern our Irish policy. We need to conciliate not so much Ireland as the Irish; who in their dispersion resemble somewhat the other great dispersed people of the world—resemble them in their invincible nationality, in their quenchless love of country, no matter how long it may be lost, or how far left behind—and perhaps in the strange worldwide power which such a scattered and yet unbroken nation is likely to acquire among the races of mankind. We have already dwelt at some length upon the manner in which the peasantry were driven out; the landlords being actuated partly by humane motives, partly by selfishness. We have expressed our belief that emigration, which was undoubtedly necessary to give relief to an overpopulated country, was too sweepingly used—an illustration of the danger of those very efficacious remedies in reckless hands. Nothing was simpler than when the tenantry of an estate were sinking, unable to pay their rents, or unassisted to retrieve their position, to clear them off at the rate of £5 or £6 per head. The land was restored at once to its original value; and they were transferred to a country where, by the exercise of industry and by copying the energy of its inhabitants, they might attain a position unattainable in Ireland. It was all very plain and simple; and the Americans were delighted to receive the population thus cleared off the land of our country, for they put a considerable money value on each able-bodied emigrant. We conferred an immense increase of strength upon our great rival; and threw away what might have been a source of wealth and power, but was, from temporary causes, and from mismanagement, a source of weakness. In the preceding chapter, we suggested how the small farmers whom there is now such a political demand for, might have been retained and restored. If, instead of being allowed to fall three or four years into arrear, they had been assisted to the amount of one of those years' rent absolutely lost, the farmers might have been restored to solvency, and the landlords saved the heavy loss which ultimately they were glad to accept as a condition of obtaining possession of the land. But the history of what might have been would be endless; we must confine ourselves to what took place. It was supposed that the emigrants would give us no more trouble; that, like the lost tribes, they would be heard of no more. It may, however, be imagined, that the multitudes forced into exile did not entertain the most friendly feelings towards the English nation, represented to them by their landlords. Nor were their prejudices corrected by the people amongst whom they had gone to live. They prospered; and many of them grew rich; but still they longed as savagely as when a tatterdemalion army they were landed on the shores of America, for the day of vengeance prophesied of by Meagher, when they should come in sight of Ireland again, and the sunlight should gleam on the bayonets of the Irish army. In the year 1859 the reaction of emigration commenced. For at least two years previously there had been a return of the midnight drills, occasional robberies of arms, and the other symptoms of disaffection from which Ire-

land is seldom wholly free. Even before any movement began to be felt from America, the people at home became conscious of a strength across the water.

It is hard to trace when the connection was established between disaffection at home and its sympathisers abroad. One of the first fruits of such a connection was probably the Phoenix Society, which was believed to have been inspired from the United States. Returned emigrants naturally became promoters of disloyalty. After many years of struggle with fortune, they came back with the idea of settling in Ireland again, and probably expecting, as men do, to find everything much as they had left it. No one recollected them; in the workhouse they might find some old companion, but the world of boyhood had fallen into other hands. The Scotch farmer, in a comfortable slated house, occupied the land that had belonged to them and to their fathers, but did not know that such people ever existed, and had obliterated all the well-remembered landmarks. Then they became conspirators; some who had been in the American army acted as drill sergeants. The Government, however, suppressed this movement with little difficulty. In 1861 the American civil war broke out, and put an end for the time being to the machinations of Irish Americans in the United Kingdom; although we are disposed to think that the recruiting in Ireland for the Federal army had an ulterior object, at least that it was so represented to those who were induced to enlist. An immense number of Irish joined the army of the Northern States, believing that by so doing they would, through the war in which they were engaging, achieve their own object of liberating Ireland. The sympathies and interests of England, if not her arms, were on the side of the Confederates—this alone was sufficient to throw the Irish on that of the Federals, even if there had not been the more obvious reason that the majority of them resided in the northern States. Their nationality was enlisted in the cause; they were formed into a brigade; fighting *as* Irishmen, they seemed almost to be fighting *for* Ireland; they were at all events gaining the discipline and practice in arms, without which their countrymen at home were so powerless; and there is no doubt that American statesmen did nothing to disabuse their minds of an impression, that, in return for their aid in restoring the Union, America would help them in the liberation of their country. And so possibly she would have done, if the civil war had been more rapidly decided. A war with England was often spoken of as a basis of reunion, and the Trent affair was very near bringing it about;—but by the time that the South succumbed from sheer exhaustion, the national debt had been, to borrow Mr. Sumner's phraseology, "piled mountains high;" there had been a great drain upon the fighting material of the country, and it was too late to think of another civil war on a larger scale. During the continuance of the contest which they deemed the preliminary of a struggle to liberate Ireland, the Irish soldiers formed an association which they called the Fenian brotherhood, so named from the traditionary followers of Fionn or Finn MacCool, as the name is conventionally spelled. The Fenians, or men of Finn, are by some identified with the Phenicians; and legend represents them as the defenders of the weak and the redressers of wrong, skilful in arms, and, according to one account, coming from beyond the sea.



The Irish Americans adopted the tradition as prophetic; and the name was well adapted to catch the fancy of an imaginative and legend-loving nation. Whether the Brotherhood had its beginning before or in the course of the civil war, it made rapid progress during that period of military excitement, and in 1864 its enrolled members numbered 80,000, of whom 14,620 were in the American army or navy. Social, district, and state circles had each their centres, and over all there was a Head Centre, who in 1865 was elevated to the rank of President, and given a Vice-President to assist him in the duties of his office. There was also a Fenian Congress, the first session of which was held at Chicago in 1863, and the second at Cincinnati in 1865. A council of Ten sat permanently to advise the President; and public offices were taken in New York on a scale suitable to the dignity of an independent government. The purchase of this building, furnishing it in a handsome style, and keeping up the requisite staff of clerks—besides paying the salaries of the president, vice-president, and councillors, of course required a considerable income; and this was raised by the issue of Irish Republican bonds, bearing a good rate of interest. They were extensively invested in by the credulous, particularly by domestic servants; simple hardworking Irish girls, who gladly expended their earnings in such a glorious cause; and firmly believed they would be repaid by a nice piece of land with a good house on it, in Ireland. We do not believe, as it was uncharitably assumed, that Mr. O'Mahoney, the president, and the other officers of the I. R. B., or Irish Republican Brotherhood, were a band of intentional swindlers, and adopted this system of raising money merely to defray their own salaries; but as a matter of fact, the large sums thus obtained did go principally to paying the government, and a very small proportion to the purchase of arms, or really advancing the object for which they were subscribed. The application of the funds soon gave rise to dissension; suspicions grew into charges, and angry recrimination ensued. The consequence was a split in the Brotherhood; one party holding with O'Mahoney, and the other, headed by a person named Roberts, deposing him from the presidency. The possession of power and the disposal of funds were not the only grounds of dispute; Roberts advocated the invasion of Canada in order to obtain a basis of operations against England; and he hoped that by making the attack from the territory of the United States, the Government of Washington might be drawn into the quarrel. O'Mahoney and his followers insisted that Ireland herself should be the battlefield, and that everything possible was being done to expedite the work. Already Stephens, the Irish Head Centre, with a number of men discharged from the American army, had made considerable progress in arming and organizing the people, and glorious news would soon be on its way of a successful rising.

The conclusion of the war between the Northern and Southern States was followed by the disbanding of two great armies, and a considerable reduction of the naval forces. Immense numbers of Irish soldiers were let loose; their campaigning had indisposed them for a life of industry, and the superabundance of applicants, as well as the depressed condition of the country, even if they had been desirous to beat their swords into ploughshares, made it difficult to procure peaceful employment.

The consequence was that Fenianism at once assumed a most dangerous and aggressive form. There was an invasion of Ireland by the disbanded armies of America in a shape in which there was no resisting it. Every steamer and sailing-vessel from the United States was freighted with soldiers in plain clothes, generally speaking armed with revolvers, but carrying no papers by which they might, if subjected to search, be criminated. Every town was filled with these men, smart soldierly-looking fellows, darkened by service in the Southern States, and distinguishable by wearing beards and moustaches, which are never worn among the Irish peasantry. They permeated the whole country, even the most Protestant parts of Ulster, and might be seen loitering about every village public-house. Generally speaking, they did not endeavour to conceal their suspicious character by any ostensible occupation; but in some cases they went about as hawkers or pedlers, under the pretence of selling their goods, visiting the farm houses and labourers' cottages, and swearing in the people. The oath was in substance that the juror would be ready to take up arms for the Irish Republic; and another was added for those who were not disposed to be active participators, and was probably compulsory, that they would not fight on the other side, and would not turn informers. Notwithstanding, however, this latter precaution, the government was well informed of the movements and plans of the conspirators; detective policemen and spies were high in the councils of the I. R. B.; there is reason to think they had climbed into the Republican ministry itself; and some went so far as to hint that one of their number had reached the highest elevation of which Republican institutions admit. At last, as the year drew to a close and the preparations ripened, and the moment of action had almost arrived, several hundreds of Irish Americans being congregated in Dublin, and along with a number of men who were brought over from England, kept under pay at the rate of eighteen-pence a-day, large magazines of ammunition and depôts of arms being ready, and a quantity of a liquid known as "Greek fire" bottled for use, the government thought the time had come to strike a great blow that would paralyse the arm of the conspiracy. Parliament was sitting; and on a Friday evening ministers came down to the house and declared the necessity of suspending the constitution in Ireland. The telegraph brought this unwelcome news to the Fenians; they hastened their preparations, and we are disposed to believe that Sunday was fixed upon for the outbreak. But on Saturday standing orders were set aside; the bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act went through all its stages in both houses, and nothing remained but that it should receive the royal assent. The Queen was at Osborne; a special train was in waiting for the peers who should receive her Majesty's commission; the Houses sat awaiting their return. It was past midnight; who could tell what events might be happening across the water in the darkness; the patient was in imminent danger, and this assembly watching over it was waiting for the remedy; the old and unfailing instrument for the pacification of Ireland was on its way by special train. It was about one o'clock on Sunday morning that the Commons were summoned to the bar of the House of Lords to hear the royal assent which the Lords commissioners had fetched. Lords and Commons retired to



rest with their minds at ease, satisfied that the remedy would work; that before their shutters were opened in the morning the prisons of Ireland, which along with the workhouses are the best managed institutions in that country, would be full to overflowing. But the Irish government had been even sharper than this; for on Saturday, in anticipation of the bill passing, a great sweep was made of the Yankee gentlemen who had for some time been infesting the streets and necessitating that the police should go in patrols and armed with cutlasses. Extensive arrests were made in Cork and elsewhere. Nearly the whole force of Irish Americans and most of the leaders were secured. The Head Centre Stephens eluded the search of the police for a while; but at last his wife, who was purchasing goods in Dublin, was traced to a house at Sandymount, where the chief of the conspiracy was found living in luxury, and, with a companion, also of some note, arrested and lodged in Kilmainham prison. It is said that the Fenians among their other preparations had made the rather inauspicious one of obtaining accurate plans of the jails, and had in some cases succeeded in making friends among the turnkeys. Of all their preparations this was undoubtedly the wisest and the most likely to be practically of use to them. So it turned out in the case of Stephens; the governor of the jail to which such an all-important prisoner was committed does not seem to have exercised due vigilance, and refused extra assistance when it was offered to him. The Head Centre of Ireland effected an escape that was almost magical; there had been no earthquake, and yet the inner doors opened; and, although it was made to appear as if the wall had been scaled, the general belief was that the outer gate also had opened and that the prisoner had walked out. A commission sat; the governor was dismissed and a turnkey was criminated; but it is not for us to say, or even to hint, whether the explanation lay deeper than the insufficient vigilance of the former and the treachery of the latter. Stephens, after keeping the detectives and constabulary busy for some time, escaped first to France and then to America. The prestige of his escape made him for a time the leading man in the I. R. B., and the O'Mahoney and Roberts factions both endeavoured to obtain his countenance. He sided with the former, and prophesied that notwithstanding their temporary reverses, before the end of 1866 there would be fighting in Ireland; but this prophecy was not believed even by the most sanguine of his friends. Previous to his arrival, in order to give an impulse to the movement, O'Mahoney considered it necessary to take some immediate action. Accordingly a descent was planned on the island of Campobello, New Brunswick, from Eastport, Maine. A fast steamer was purchased in New York and despatched thither with arms; and Major B. Doran Killian was given the command of the expeditionary force, which consisted of five hundred men. After a delay of some days, during which the force openly paraded the streets of Eastport, the supply of arms arrived; but on the urgent representation of the British Consul the arms were seized; a war steamer appeared; and although the Fenians succeeded in effecting an incursion, they were immediately obliged to retrace their steps and beat an inglorious retreat. It was now the turn of the Roberts party to show what they could do; and it was planned that a simultaneous invasion

should be made from Buffalo and St. Albans, under Generals Sweeny and Spear, and the Fenians concentrated at both places in considerable force. On the other side, naturally indignant at this unprovoked attack of the Irish upon a country that had been an asylum to multitudes of them, and that was not in any way connected with the wrongs of which they complained, Canada was thoroughly aroused, and the volunteers under Sir John Michel, supported by regular troops, occupied Toronto, Hamilton, London, and St. Catherine. The government of the United States, which it can scarcely be denied, was highly culpable in allowing matters to proceed so far, now interposed its authority; in fact, not to have done so would have been war. A seizure of arms was made at St. Albans, and General Grant arrived at Buffalo; but not in time to prevent the Fenians from partially carrying out their design. Twelve hundred men under Colonel O'Niel, a graduate of West Point, occupied the site of Fort Erie, on the 1st of June; and on the 2d there was an engagement in which nine Canadian volunteers were killed and a large number wounded, while of the Fenians, besides killed and wounded, a considerable number were taken prisoners. Their reinforcements intercepted by the United States authorities, they considered it advisable to recross on the night of the 2d. They nominally surrendered to General Grant, and on giving their parole to abandon the enterprise, were permitted to return to their homes. From St. Albans also on the 7th of June the Fenians under General Spear advanced upon St. Armand; but being confronted by a force of volunteers, they retreated with a loss of fifteen taken prisoners. Meanwhile a proclamation was issued by the President for the preservation of neutrality. Sweeny and Roberts were arrested, the latter owing to his refusal to enter into any engagement, being detained in prison for several days, but in the end released unconditionally; and general Meade checked further movements from St. Albans. In August another invasion was threatened, but did not take place; and the design of seizing Canada was finally, it is to be hoped, abandoned. The Fenian prisoners were put upon their trial, and one of them named Lynch was condemned to death; but notwithstanding the injudicious interference of Mr. Seward, the sentence was commuted, by the advice of the home government, to penal servitude for life. There was so little justification for the attack upon the Canadian colonists, which was not privileged as an act of rebellion is, in the opinion of most Englishmen, and was so completely distinct from insurrection at home, that if the extreme sentence had been carried out, there might have been a question as to the policy, but there would have been none as to the justice of the execution. The object of the raiders was not to effect the liberation, but the conquest of Canada; and such an object, when pursued by individuals unauthorized by any State, is distinctly piratical; and those who endeavour to effect it, deserve the punishment of death. We recognise the right of the Fenians to attempt at their peril the overthrow of English rule in Ireland by all fair and honourable means, as the Garibaldini effected the liberation of Naples; but to make a bloodthirsty attack upon a free and independent and friendly people, was an act for which there was no excuse, and which could not be regarded as privileged. Certainly the United States government had



earned no right to advise us; for the remissness of England in allowing the clandestine escape of the Confederate cruisers was not comparable even remotely to the conduct of the Washington government in freely tolerating up to the last point, and then failing to restrain the Fenian raids. It permitted great bodies of men commanded by American officers, some of whom were in its pay, to move through the country in military array with the openly proclaimed purpose of invading a friendly State, and these noisy swarms to concentrate on the frontier. Then, when a peaceful country had been thoroughly alarmed, thousands withdrawn from their occupations to meet an invasion, and an army of volunteers and regulars distributed on the Canadian side, General Grant was ordered to appear at Buffalo as the *deus ex machinâ*; but so desirous was the American government that anxiety should not be relieved too soon, or the interest of the plot marred to the last moment, that its precautions came too late; Canadian soil had been violated, blood had been spilled; and when the raiders returned to the shelter of the States, the leaders who were responsible for this unjustifiable bloodshed were allowed to return home in peace, or to resume military duties in the American army. That we should have passed over such gross neglect, and the great loss and inconvenience it entailed on our colony, was the worst compliment we could pay to the government of the United States.

We have alluded to the prediction of Stephens, that notwithstanding the capture of the organizers of the conspiracy in Ireland, and the flight of all who could escape, there would be fighting before the conclusion of the year. But 1866 ended without the fulfilment of his promise. It was generally believed that the Fenian conspiracy was practically at an end, and would not suffice much longer even for the support of a needy president and half a dozen head centres. At the commencement of the session of 1867, the Queen's speech (February 5) contained the following paragraph relating to Ireland—

"The persevering efforts and unscrupulous assertions of treasonable conspirators abroad, have during the autumn excited the hopes of some disaffected persons in Ireland, and the apprehensions of the loyal population; but the firm yet temperate exercise of the power entrusted to the executive, and the hostility manifested against the conspiracy by men of all classes and creeds, have greatly tended to restore public confidence, and have rendered hopeless any attempt to disturb the general tranquillity. I trust that you may consequently be enabled to dispense with the continuance of any exceptional legislation for that part of my dominions."

The announcement was made in the debate, that it was not proposed to renew the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act; most of those detained under it having been already released, and there being no apparent likelihood of its being wanted again. Five days after this announcement England was thrown into a state of incredulous amazement, by learning that Chester Castle was threatened by a large force of Fenians, and that the Guards had been despatched to defend it. A portion of the press ridiculed the idea, and declared with the utmost confidence that a "prize fighter's ruse" had been taken for a Fenian invasion. The facts of the case were as follows. On the 11th of February,

many hundreds of young men, unmistakably Irish, poured into Chester from Manchester, Liverpool, and other towns, without any ostensible object. The inhabitants became much alarmed as the numbers increased, and still they kept pouring in by every train, as well as on foot by the turnpike roads, and the belief became general that they were Fenians, and that their design was upon the 30,000 stand of arms in Chester Castle. The Mayor telegraphed to the Home Secretary; troops were immediately ordered from Manchester, and the Volunteers were called out. Towards evening it was reported that so many as fifteen hundred strangers were in or about the town; they moved about in groups, and on any attempt of a citizen to join a party, immediately dispersed and met again. A public meeting was called at 7 o'clock, at which a large number of special constables were enrolled, and the Volunteers who had been temporarily dismissed were again put under arms. Meanwhile a battalion of the Scots Fusilier Guards were hastily despatched by special train from Euston Square, and arrived in Chester at half-past two o'clock in the morning. On the twelfth the strangers went, as they came, in silence; and by night they had all disappeared. A field adjoining the railway station was found to be strewn with cartridges which had been prepared for the rifles they purposed seizing; packets of cartridges were also found in the river Dee. The whole plan was afterwards ascertained from those who turned informers; the intention was, having secured the arms and cut off telegraphic communication, to take possession of the railroad and proceed to Holyhead; seize the large Kingstown and Holyhead steamers, and cross over to Ireland. Scarcely had the sensation caused by this mysterious affair subsided, when upon information from Liverpool the steamers arriving in Dublin at the North Wall, were boarded by the police, and large bodies of men arrested; extensive arrests were also made in Cork. Then came intelligence that the insurrection had really commenced in Kerry; the first notice of it was given by a run upon the banks in Killarney and Tralee. The farmers and country people who had deposits came flocking in for two or three days before, and insisted upon being paid in gold. The banks were besieged by depositors; and when there was a short delay in the arrival of specie for which the managers had telegraphed, there was a perfect panic among the crowds of simple country people who filled the streets, and who firmly believed that the whole established order of things was about to be overthrown. No extraordinary steps were taken by the authorities until the telegraph wires communicating with Cahirciveen and Valentia were found to have been cut, and information was received that a Fenian rising was imminent, and that a person named Moriarty, recognisable by a disfigurement which he had received in the American war, would arrive next morning by the long car from Cahirciveen to take the command in Killarney. The car was met outside the town, and Moriarty was brought in a prisoner; but during the day vague news filtered through the people to the authorities of a rising in the south-west of the county, and towards the evening it was reported that many thousands of Fenians were marching on the town. The cutting of the telegraph wires kept the magistrates at Killarney in ignorance of what was occurring in Cahirciveen. There the design of the insurrectionists had been to seize and pillage the



town, raise the country, and march upon Killarney and Tralee. One of their number on the evening before warned the head constable to have the gunboat moved up to a position where it would command the town; this advice, which was given from a feeling of compunction, was acted upon, a body of marines was landed, and so much of the plan frustrated. Nor did the country rise; but seven or eight hundred men miscellaneously armed, a large number of them with American rifles, set out upon the march. Their achievements in the way consisted of plundering a coast-guard station at Kells, a little fishing village near Rossbeigh, and shooting a mounted policeman, who endeavoured to ride through them with despatches. The Fenian leader, Colonel O'Connor, fired the shot, and thus prevented authentic news of the outbreak from reaching Killarney that day. Meanwhile as darkness closed about the miserable town that gives its name to the Lakes, the excitement of the people grew intense; the gaslight from the shops and public houses lighted up an idle but expectant crowd. The constabulary drew in from country stations, and to the number of thirty, commanded by the sub-inspector, Mr. Colomb, were posted in the Railway Hotel—a building of great size which stands opposite the railway terminus. Most of the neighbouring gentry flocked into the hotel in great alarm. It was understood to be the intention of the Fenians to burn the principal houses, particularly Muckross Abbey and Kenmare House. At the former, a barge was moored upon the lake ready to receive and carry to one of the islands the family of the proprietor, who was absent from home; and the gamekeepers and other retainers were armed, under the direction of the clergyman of Muckross. Nothing as yet was known of what might be expected from the Fenians, or what kind of assailants they would prove; but as a proportion of them were believed to be American soldiers, with great experience of fighting, and whose courage had been tested in trans-Atlantic battles, it was feared that the resistance might prove ineffectual; we can remember that it was doubted whether such veterans might not be more than a match even for British soldiers. This was undoubtedly the most trying moment in the whole course of the conspiracy; the force believed to be approaching containing many desperate men accustomed to bloodshed and plunder, was said to amount to several thousands, to be well armed, and bent upon extermination; and it seemed incredible that military officers of experience should have neglected the obvious precaution of destroying portions of railway and breaking down bridges. Having large numbers of adherents along the line of railroad to Malinbeg, and the rising having been premeditated, their neglect of this measure is inexplicable, unless on the supposition that they intended the Kerry rising merely as a feint to draw away troops from the rest of Ireland.

On the supposition that they had broken the railway communication, it was feared help would come too late. The small body of police posted behind the sandbags with which they had fortified the hotel windows, and the families relying on their protection, naturally passed an anxious night; and never was a more welcome sound than that caused by the arrival at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning of a train bringing in a detachment of the 60th Rifles. Then troops of all arms began

to arrive, and as the bugles sounded, and the tramp of detachment after detachment was heard, the anxious inhabitants went to sleep in peace. Immediately on the arrival of the Rifles, they were despatched along the road that borders the northwestern shore of Loch Leane, by which the rebels were supposed to be approaching. After marching nearly as far as the Gap of Dunloe, they turned back to Killarney; but had they proceeded half a mile further, they would have met the Fenians, who, fagged by a march of thirty miles, and disheartened by the falling off of many of their number, would have proved an easy capture. They, on their part, on hearing of the preparations to receive them in Killarney, turned aside and entered the woods on the Toomies, mountains which rise from the side of the Lower Lake, opposite the town of Killarney, and reach to Muckcross Jemesne. The next day, Brigadier-general Sir Alfred Horsford, who was in command of the troops, endeavoured to surround the Fenians in the woods where they were known to be concealed; traces of their presence were found, the horse and saddle of the mounted policeman—but no prisoners were captured. Mr. Herbert of Muckcross, who arrived in Killarney by special train, fully expecting to find his house burnt down, assisted in the pursuit, and almost touched one of the principal Fenians who was lying concealed in the bracken, and who covering him with his revolver, held his breath and remained undiscovered. The great mistake was made of supposing that the fugitives could not escape on the side of the Gap of Dunloe, and not sending troops to occupy it. In the early dawn next day, some moving specks were seen on the horizon of the mountains; under good guidance the Fenians crossed and descended the Purple Mountain on which the goats seem barely able to maintain their footing; they were observed passing over a bridge in the Gap; they obtained food at some farmhouses, and probably escaped in the direction of Kenmare. A detachment of soldiers was sent round on outside cars, and learned these particulars; the Irish peasant has a mischievous pleasure in giving information, when it is past being turned to account. The leader, Colonel O'Connor, alone remained in the neighbourhood of Killarney; and for some weeks, whilst a vigorous search was being made for him, lived within half a mile of the town in the boat house of Flesk Priory. The fishermen of the lakes brought him food, and while the mountains were scoured and the deer forests explored, no one thought of searching such a spot; but it required some nerve to sojourn within hearing of the bugles of the military, as a large reward was offered for his capture, and he was pretty sure of being hanged, if caught.

This ended the Kerry rising. Sir A. Horsford, with four hundred men, continued in occupation of the Railway Hotel, and a gunboat with a force of marines was moved up the Kenmare river. But while men were congratulating each other on the collapse of Fenianism in February, with the beginning of March it burst out again, simultaneously over the whole country. Ash Wednesday, the 5th of March, was the day chosen, with a view to impressive effect, for the general rising to take place. Roman Catholics at that black and bitter time of year, on the day which commences a long period of penance and mortification, come up one by one to the altar, and the priest signs with ashes a



cross upon their foreheads repeating the words in Latin, "Thou art man, and man is dust, and to dust thou shalt return." But however well chosen, regard being had only to dramatic effect, it was a most unfit season to commence a guerilla warfare. The long dark nights, advantageous to burglars, were not so to rebels; and the bitter cold soon covered the mountains, the fortresses of an insurrection, with a sheet of snow that made them untenable. On the evening of the 5th the Dublin Fenians withdrew from the city, street-fighting not being consistent with the general plan of the campaign, which was to keep up a desultory harassing warfare, destroy or capture the small bodies of military police scattered over Ireland, but come to no decisive engagement. The rebellion was to be everywhere, yet nowhere—to show no substantial front to the attack of disciplined troops and artillery. The seizure of Dublin castle had formed the central point of former rebellions; but the design of this was to undertake no enterprise above the strength of new and ill armed levies; murder and plunder were prohibited. In fact the Fenians were not to fight, but to run away,—from policy, not from want of valour—and in other respects to behave like the chivalrous Fenians of old. The great object was to keep up a rebellion long enough and with sufficient success to give the government of the United States an excuse for recognising them as belligerents and letting go half a dozen Alabamas. Fillibustering expeditions would have been organized in America if the Fenians had made any head, and probably a war would have become inevitable. The rebellion failed to achieve its object partly from the inclemency of the season, partly from the fact that the rebels could not even storm a police barrack, and did not give their friends the flimsiest pretext to recognise their belligerency. Tallaght, a quiet village six or seven miles from Dublin, was the place where the rebel forces were to muster; and thither under the shades of a winter evening hastened upwards of a thousand men and lads, principally of the labouring classes, but with a sprinkling of drapers' assistants. They were armed with rifles and revolvers, pikes and daggers, and had a supply of bread and meat. Scarcely had they cleared the outskirts of Dublin when troops started in pursuit. There were Scots Greys and infantry, and three guns at their heels; and when they approached Tallaght, a few police under sub-inspector Burke were drawn up across the road, and on the Fenians firing upon them, discharged a volley aimed low into the thick of the crowd, which took considerable effect. Donoghue, the Fenian leader, was killed, and his followers not knowing what force was in front, escaped into the fields. The military now arrived, and the Fenians made for the mountains, the pursuit lasting all night. Two hundred and fifty were captured and brought into Dublin next morning; the dark line of prisoners, guarded on either side by military, marching to the Castle Yard, where they were to be paraded before the lord-lieutenant, reached the whole length of Dame Street. Besides the prisoners, who presented a most wretched appearance after a winter night's experience of rebellion, a great quantity of arms, which had been cast away in the flight, were found along the road between Rathfarnham and Tallaght, and brought in by the troops. While this was going on, similar disturbances took place at Drogheda, and more or less over the

whole of Ireland south of Dublin. The following proclamation justifying a resort to arms was sent to all the newspapers; we quote it at length because it expresses, not without force, the genuine belief of a majority of the unendowed classes:—

“I. R. Proclamation! The Irish people to the world; we have suffered centuries of outrage, enforced poverty, and bitter misery. Our rights and liberties have been trampled on by an alien aristocracy, who, treating us as foes, usurped our lands and drew away from our unfortunate country all material riches. The real owners of the soil were removed to make way for cattle, and driven across the ocean to seek the means of living and the political rights denied them at home; while our men of thought and action were condemned to loss of life or liberty. But we never lost the memory and hope of a national existence. We appealed in vain to the reason and justice of the dominant powers. Our mildest remonstrances were met with sneers and contempt. Our appeals to arms were always unsuccessful. To-day, having no honourable alternative left, we again appeal to force as our last resource. We accept the conditions of appeal manfully, deeming it better to die in the struggle for freedom than continue an existence of utter serfdom. All men are born with equal rights, and in associating together to protect one another and bear public burdens, justice demands that such association should rest upon a basis which maintains equality, instead of destroying it. We therefore declare that unable to endure longer the curse of monarchical government, we aim at founding a Republic, based upon universal suffrage, which shall secure to all the intrinsic value of their labour. The soil of Ireland, at present in possession of an oligarchy, belongs to us the Irish people, and to us it must be restored. We declare also in favour of absolute liberty of conscience, and the complete separation of church and State. We appeal to the Highest Tribunal for evidence of the justice of our cause. History bears witness to the intensity of our sufferings; and we declare in the face of our brethren that we intend no war against the people of England; our war is against the aristocratic locusts, whether English or Irish, who have eaten the verdure of our fields—against the aristocratic leeches who drain our blood and theirs. Republicans of the entire world, our cause is your cause; our enemy is your enemy. Let your hearts be with us. As for you, workmen of England, it is not only your hearts we want but your arms. Remember the starvation and degradation brought to your firesides by the oppression of labour. Remember the past; look well to the future; and avenge yourselves by giving liberty to your children, in the coming struggle for human freedom. Herewith we proclaim the Irish Republic.

(A harp)

#### THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.”

This address, concocted in Dublin, *urbi et orbi*, with all its finery of language, and reading rather ridiculously in the light of the event which it announced, is confirmatory of the view we have already taken of the popular land theory; and we also see American and Mazzinian elements breaking out in its composition. We cannot enter



into a detailed account of the disturbances announced with such a flourish. There were many unsuccessful attacks upon police barracks, repetitions of the battle of Ballingarry. The most sustained of these was at Kilmallock, where a notable Fenian named Dunne was in command; but the police defended themselves valourously until relief arrived. There was also a sharp struggle in Drogheda, where a great many Fenians were killed, wounded, and taken prisoners. The proceedings of the Cork Fenians rather resembled those of the Dublin; but they were not followed up with the same vigour, and most of them got safely home. In Tipperary a detachment of carbineers under Mr. de Gernon came upon a Fenian camp which had been established upon an ancient Danish rath. The carbineers spiritedly charged up one side, the Fenians down the other with the advantage of the ground; five of them were shot, and their leader, Bourke, was wounded and taken prisoner, and proved to be an important capture. The rebels were driven away from a repast which they were about to make on the carcase of a pig and two bags of potatoes. To the Tipperary Fenians had been intrusted the important task of seizing the Limerick Junction, where the Dublin and Cork railway is intersected by the Limerick and Waterford, not far from the town of Tipperary. Efforts were made by blocking the line and tearing up rails to prevent the military from taking possession of it; but the authorities were too quick; the obstacles interposed were feeble, the damage was soon repaired. The Fenian general, Massey, who was to have commanded in Tipperary, but had been accompanied over from New York by a detective, was arrested in the refreshment room, and fainted in his captor's arms; a large force was soon concentrated at the junction, and flying columns were sent out which rapidly traversed the country on outside cars, and obliged the Fenians to take to the mountains. Large masses of them were observed on the Galtees, and a fall of snow made them still more visible; even there they were pursued, and after some days of great hardship, were obliged to disperse to their homes. Six flying columns were organized to act from Limerick, Tipperary, Thurles, Cork, Mallow and Waterford, each accompanied by a stipendiary magistrate. Their rapid movements made it impossible for the rebels to concentrate anywhere, and soon reduced the whole region to its normal condition. Only in one instance was there anything in the nature of a collision; it occurred at Bansha wood, and resulted in several Fenians being killed and wounded, and forty captured.

The suppression of the insurrection was followed by its judicial consequences. Special commissions were held for the trial of the prisoners; the jails of Ireland were crowded with them to such an extent that it was necessary, in order to make room, to transfer a large number of convicts to those in the North of Ireland. It was a good sign that no difficulty was experienced in finding juries to convict; and the counsel and judges who took part in the proceedings, lost no opportunity of impressing upon the people the folly, and consequent criminality, of the attempt in which they had been engaged to separate from the British empire. They were reminded that, owing to the enormously increased power which modern inventions gave to regular troops, no insurrection could henceforth be successful against a state possessing an army,

but a military pronunciamiento; and the attempts to corrupt Irish soldiers, with scarcely any exceptions, had not only been unsuccessful, but had generally resulted in the exposure and punishment of the persons making the attempt. The good effect of such reasonings was somewhat neutralised by the speeches of the prisoners, which were in some cases eloquent and fervent, and excited strong sympathy. Bourke particularly, on being called on to say why the death sentence should not be passed upon him, made a speech which, though inflated in style, was evidently full of genuine patriotic feeling, and produced a great sensation in Ireland. It was fortunate that the government of Lord Derby, after considerable hesitation, and to the dissatisfaction of the landlord party in Ireland, consented to commute the sentence to penal servitude for life. Most of the prisoners were indicted for treason-felony, and received sentences which were severe, but it was believed nominal. The rebels of '48 had all been pardoned, except those who broke their parole and escaped; and no doubt was entertained that the same clemency would be extended to the Fenians. We should add, that the nature of the evidence on which the prisoners were convicted helped to enlist popular sympathy in their favour. The infamous traitors, Corydon and Nagle, made the accused seem to be on the true and right side. The only informer of any respectability was the general Massey, who was to have taken the command in Tipperary, and who, in order to save his life, gave very important information.

Such was the end of a rebellion which could not possibly have achieved its object. Sir Hugh Rose, who was one of the generals that had quelled the Indian mutiny, and as the bloodthirsty delighted to recall, had blown the Sepoy prisoners from his guns, was in command of a powerful force. An army could be thrown in a few hours upon any part of the country where disaffection might arise. Ireland was no Poland, where 20,000 rebels could baffle 180,000 regulars. It is intersected by roads and railways which make it easily penetrable in every direction. The length and breadth of the land is studded with police stations, and in no one instance where the constabulary defended themselves, were their assailants successful. As we before said, the season of the year was particularly ill chosen. Above all, the immense influence of the Roman Catholic church was put forth against the conspiracy, and this cut it off from the support of the best part of the people. The weight of this influence, after the failure of the insurrection, was to a great degree taken off. When sympathy grew strong for men who had ceased to be rebels, and through the process of conviction and punishment had become the confessors and martyrs of Ireland, the Roman Catholic church was obliged to relax its severity, and allow the priests more liberty to give play to their strong national feelings. Hence, as the conspiracy fell, the sympathy with it rose; and whereas Lord Wodehouse was able to say in 1865 that there was no Fenianism among the occupiers of land, two years after this would have been a rash and fallacious assertion. Marked Fenians, however, were obliged to take refuge in England, where the Habeas Corpus Act was not suspended. On the 18th of September 1867, two important prisoners, named Kelly and Deasy, were being conveyed by the Manchester police in a prison van from the police court to the jail, and were rescued by a body of fifty or sixty Fenians



who lay in wait in the Hyde Road. Serjeant Brett, the police officer, who was inside the van, was shot dead on refusing to give up the keys, and the prisoners got away and were not recaptured. Many persons supposed to have been engaged in the rescue were arrested, and the first batch put on trial consisted of Allen, Larkin, Gould, Maguire, and Shore. They were all found guilty of being concerned in the murder of serjeant Brett, and sentenced to death. The next two batches of prisoners, tried upon the same charge and on the same evidence, were acquitted by English juries in Manchester, where the offence had been committed. It was proved immediately after that Maguire was innocent, although he had been convicted on the same evidence as the others, and he received a free pardon, and was reinstated in the Royal Marines, in which he had been a private. Shore was also exempted, and all being taken into account, there was a strong feeling that the capital sentence would not, and ought not to be carried out upon the other three. Their counsel raised a point of law which, if it had been admitted, would have justified the act of which they were convicted. It was alleged that the warrant was imperfect upon which Kelly and Deasy were arrested; and that their friends were therefore entitled to rescue them by violence, and if necessary, to kill those who were taking them to prison. The cases appealed to were *R. v. Hopkin Huggett* (Chief Justice Kelyng 59) and *R. v. Tooley* (2 Lord Raymond 1296) and the language of Sir Michael Foster in his discourse on crown law. The former arose out of the rescue of a man who was impressed; but it differed from the Manchester rescue in being a sudden unpremeditated affray; eight judges held the offence to be but manslaughter; the four judges of the Queen's bench held it to be murder, but gave way to their brethren. The second case which was decided to be manslaughter by seven against five, was much stronger in favour of the prisoners, but was still wanting in the character of premeditation. But it was decided in this case that *ignorantia facti* did not matter, as it could not possibly be regarded as in itself condemnatory. Chief Justice Holt said on this point that if a man had shot a thief breaking into his house, supposing him to be a bailiff, that false supposition and ignorance of the truth would not make the deed murder. Mr. Justice Blackburn consulted the other Judges, and it appears that they were all of opinion that the point was not one which it would have been advisable to reserve; and if there had been a postponement of the execution, the result would have been the same, however the point had been decided. The most intense interest was taken in the case in Ireland; the speeches of the prisoners were read with passionate concern—and the cry which they uttered together at the conclusion of Shore's speech, "God save Ireland!" and Larkin's, "God be with ye, Irishmen and Irishwomen," had gone to the Irish heart. The crime in which they had been concerned was not what is popularly considered murder; and if it had been possible to avoid carrying out the sentence, either on the ground that the evidence was manifestly unreliable, or on a point of law, it might have discredited the ministry, and it might have been wrong and unjust, but it would have been most politic, and would have been regarded as a concession to the feelings of the Irish nation. Allen, Larkin, and Gould were executed on the 23d of No-

vember, and we shall never forget the effect produced in Ireland by the news of the execution. It was the most real grief that we have ever seen a public event produce; we can assert from close personal observation that it doubled the strength of Fenianism, both in the number of its sympathisers and in depth of feeling. It had also an effect on the conspiracy itself, which, in the end, withdrew from it much of the sympathy derived from the Manchester execution. A bitter and criminal spirit entered into its councils from which they had heretofore been free.

On the 13th of December, the wall of Pentonville prison was blown down by an explosion of gunpowder,—the design being to release the Fenian prisoner Bourke, who was supposed to be at exercise in the yard, the necessary concomitant of destroying the neighbouring houses and their inhabitants and seventy or eighty of Bourke's fellow-prisoners being disregarded by the conspirators. The Home Office had information of the plot the day before; but owing to a want of vigilance on the part of the police, who were set to watch, it was successful so far as blowing down the wall; but Bourke having been kept in his cell, did not succeed in escaping. The supposed perpetrators of the outrage were put upon their trial, but not convicted. In the beginning of 1868 two other Fenian crimes were committed, one in Canada, where the Hon. T. D'Arcy M'Gee was shot on his own door-step at Ottawa, just after leaving the House of Commons, the cause of the crime being his hostility to Fenianism. Almost the last words he uttered were in the conclusion of a speech, that he was base who would not sacrifice his popularity to the good of his country. The other crime was the attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh in Australia, the wound fortunately not proving fatal. In both cases the assassins were apprehended and hanged. Mr. Disraeli observed in moving an Address to the Queen on the escape of her son, that "some centuries ago the world was tortured with the conviction that there was some mysterious power in existence which could command in every camp, and court, and capital a poniard at its disposal and devotion. It seems at this time too that some dark confederacy of the kind is spreading over the world." Such deeds had a great effect in putting down Fenianism; while at the same time, combined with a number of wild rumours of Fenian designs which kept England in a panic, they produced a determination to take from Irishmen every cause of complaint, and to destroy the very elements of disaffection. If this can be done, it will be indeed a great and happy work; but meanwhile it is not to be supposed that the Fenians are extinct. Like Frederick Barbarossa's knights, they wait for the hour to strike; but undoubtedly their arms are growing rusty, and as we leave the great American civil war behind us, the danger diminishes year by year.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## FALL OF THE IRISH CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.

Proselytism and its effects—Opposition in the Irish Church to reform—The fall of the Establishment foreseen, but supposed to be distant, by Mr. Gladstone and others—Fenianism precipitates it—Lord Mayo's proposal—The Liberal party take up the Church question for the Election—The Resolutions carried—Ministerial explanation—Bill to suspend appointments—Passed by the Commons; rejected by the Peers—General Election and large Liberal majority—Resignation of the Ministry—The Irish Church Act as introduced—Amendments rejected—The Bill goes up almost unaltered—The Peers give it a second reading—Important Amendments—Rejected by the Commons—The Peers begin to insist—Compromise between Lords Granville and Cairns—A measure of Confiscation—Resentment of Irish Protestants—Its real cause.

THE forces which brought about the fall of the Establishment in Ireland were not evolved all at once; nor were they brought into being by the will—"the arrogant will"—as the Marquis of Salisbury termed it, "of one man." The strongest statesman is the servant, not the master of change. Mr. Gladstone, with all his power, could not have overthrown the Irish Church if it had not been in its own condition ready to fall, if the English mind had not been prepared for the measure by unforeseen events, and if the Church had not become obnoxious to five-sixths of the people of Ireland. It was not always so; after the settlement of the Tithe Question in 1837, the Protestant clergy became rather popular with the people. In many ways they made themselves useful to their neighbours. Their advice in medical matters was often preferred to that of the dispensary physician. In anything connected with public business, being looked upon as the paid agents of the Government, they were applied to in preference to the Roman Catholic priest, whose interference it was naturally supposed would be prejudicial to those for whom he acted. The wives and daughters of the clergy were kind and charitable, and the farmers and peasantry made returns in the shape of farm produce, gratuitous labour, the loan of horses, ploughs, and carts, advice as to farming operations, assistance in selling and buying. Never was there a better feeling prevalent; the fiendish spirit engendered by religious controversy had not yet entered in; the priest sat at the parson's table, and they eat and drank together like brother prophets. Well do we remember those happy times when between the Protestant clergy and the people a real affection had sprung up,—when from every peasant encountered on the road there was a friendly and respectful greeting for "the minister." The church was safe while this state of things continued. A time came too when a still kindlier feeling arose; when respect became veneration. In the dreadful years of famine the clergy of the Establishment did heroic work; and many of them sacrificed their lives for the Roman Catholic peasantry. But out of the famine commenced a movement which soon made a complete revolution in the feelings of the people. Some individuals, actuated no doubt by the best intentions, were so misguided as to select the moment when the poor, prostrated in mind and

body, were in a state to fall an easy prey to any one who offered them the means of life, to tamper with their faith, and endeavour to make converts to Protestantism. They had considerable apparent success, though it is questionable how far any ignorant person nurtured from infancy in the Roman Catholic religion, which we know takes such hold upon the heart, is capable of being honestly convinced of its falsehood. This may seem to be contradicted by the great fact of the Reformation; but we must remember how different is such a work, before and after antagonism of creeds has been established; how much the Reformation itself was political—its boundaries being mostly conterminous with the boundaries of those princes who supported it; how superficial was the Roman Catholicism of Luther's time, and how much, reacted on by the Reformation, it has changed internally. In Ireland especially it is a deep, sincere faith. The Irish are carefully instructed, and are the best Roman Catholics in the world. The priests have always been their political leaders; have identified themselves with all their aspirations, and have, it may fairly be said, won for them their freedom. Hence, to become a Protestant, is regarded in Ireland not only as religious apostasy, but as an act of treachery to a political cause, and base ingratitude to political leaders. We cannot pretend to determine whether the so-called converts were genuine or not; in our own experience they were, with scarcely an exception, impostors; but if the extensive conversion of the peasantry had been effected at a time when their minds had not been weakened by suffering—and if the pangs of famine had not supplied a motive, we should be prepared to believe that we were simply unfortunate in our experience. We know that many of those engaged in the work had more hope of the children of their converts than of the converts themselves; and possibly tolerated and even encouraged imposture, in order to obtain possession of the impostor's family. The movement prospered externally, and the clergy in all parts of Ireland emulously strove to produce converts. It was possible to find in almost any parish a few persons of doubtful character willing to be nominally converted. The Roman Catholics always took the worst view of a "conversion," and put in force against the converts the extreme form of excommunication; so that to prevent their actually starving, the clergy were obliged to provide for their support;—thus fairly laying themselves open to the charge of bribing. The ignorant but quick-witted peasantry immediately fancied they understood the motive of those noble exertions which had been put forth by the Protestants during the famine; their design was to induce them to change their religion—to sell their souls to the proselytisers. The wildest rumours gained credence; it was said, for instance, that the Protestant clergy were paid by government for every wretch they induced to declare himself a convert, and for every child they succeeded in buying or kidnapping from its parents they received a regular fee. We have, on several occasions, been applied to for the money that was supposed to be going—and applicants who declared their willingness to come to church have scarcely been driven away by the threat of exposure to their own priests. The clergy were firmly believed to be the agents of a gigantic system of bribery, and both they and their converts endured no little persecution in



consequence. The Church of Ireland was by this process made thoroughly hateful to the people; and its downfall was, if we go back to first causes, due to the proselytising system. On the other hand, the gain in converts was paltry; and although we cannot support the assertion by statistics, we are convinced by personal observation, that the Church of Rome working silently, without boasting, and without eleemosynary appeals, has been decidedly the gainer in the battle of proselytism. The movement brought such obloquy on the Protestant poor, that many of them, particularly the young, preferred going to mass with their neighbours, to enduring the mockery and persecution to which they were subjected as Protestants; while the Roman Catholics grew more bigotedly attached to their religion in proportion as their blood was aroused.\* We could instance localities in which, after a number of years of mischievous activity, the missionaries had achieved a negative result—that is, they had Romanized instead of Protestantizing the population. In the end, they only succeeded in calling attention to the fact, that as a missionary church the Irish ramification of the English Establishment had completely failed, and all over the south and west had lost its own flocks instead of gaining those of the church to which it was opposed. The extent of this loss may be judged from the large proportion of the Irish peasantry—probably a half—bearing English and therefore Protestant names.† Orangeism too contributed to the misfortunes of the Irish church; the motto inscribed on its banner, “Church and State,” connected the Establishment with that pernicious discord and violence, which are most repugnant to the spirit of Christianity. The progress of the Roman Catholic laity, also, in wealth, education, and social position was attended by a growing discontent at the stigma of inferiority, which attached to the profession of their religion.

Meantime discussions were occasionally raised in the House of Commons in which the change of feeling began to tell. But still it was only in the small radical section that hostility showed itself openly; the mouths of the Roman Catholic members were still sealed with an oath. In 1857, Mr. Fagan procured the abolition of Ministers' Money; this was the capture of an outwork, and the enemy from the point they had gained crept on their advances. The anomalies of the church began to be systematically exposed, and a heavy fire of facts and figures was kept up on its defences. In vain its champions endeavoured to obscure the fact, that over large districts where Protestantism was richly en-

\* Two societies were established to carry on the work of proselytism in Ireland—Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics, and the Irish Society. The latter sent out agents to read the scriptures in the Irish tongue—the former had also its army of scripture readers, held public controversies, and posted placards and distributed bills, often of a nature most offensive to sincere Catholics. Pious Protestants would object to having what they would consider blasphemous bills handed to their children or posted for their perusal, casting doubt or even ridicule on the Christian religion; but they expected that the Roman Catholics would receive in a spirit of calm inquiry aspersions, often in the worst taste, on the mysteries of their religion. It is remarkable that the missionaries had little or no success in the more prosperous parts of Ireland; and that the two places where they did make some mark,—Connemara in the west, and Dingle in Kerry,—were also those which would be marked on a map as the poorest spots in the whole island.

† Some slight allowance must be made for the pre-Reformation settlement of Ireland.

dowed, there were no Protestants, except a few artificially raised—the church and they mutually existing for each other—by dividing among them upon paper the population of Belfast and Ulster, and giving congregations to the southern and western clergy, by the easy but not very convincing process of striking an average. Other and better arguments, however, were not wanting to the defenders of the Irish Church—but in spite of the cogency of their reasoning, there were many Churchmen whose hearts failed them; and who earnestly advocated, as the only method of rendering the position of the Irish Establishment secure, a sweeping internal reform. The law already provided that a parish, where there were no Protestant parishioners, should on the death of its incumbent be united to a neighbouring parish—its income to be transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for application elsewhere, or restored in case of its ever regaining a Protestant population. This might have been made the germ of a thorough redistribution by which all anomalies would have been removed; while any surplus that remained over and above the supply of the Church's legitimate wants, might have been as the Whigs (who were not such bad friends to the Establishment), proposed in the Appropriation Clause, applied to the purposes of national education. The Establishment might have been saved by submitting to such a process; but Churches always seem incapable of *internal* reformation. The great body of the clergy set themselves steadfastly against change, and doggedly defended every anomaly,—in fact, seemed to have that unaccountable taste for anomalies which corporations generally acquire. The bishops, who ought to have taken reform in hand, were afraid to touch an old and insecure fabric; and the only prelate who made any movement, emphasised the inaction of his brethren. Although it was evident that in the end numbers must carry the day, it was believed there was no immediate danger; and those who were benefited by the anomalies and inequalities of the church had little concern about the future. Wise in their generation, careless for what lay beyond it, the Irish clergy might have been justified in their policy of inertness, had it not been for a vast deranging influence, beyond the foresight of ordinary men. Fenianism precipitated the fall of the Irish Church. This conspiracy defeated in Ireland broke out over the whole empire, and all the wild alarms which prevailed in England, particularly in the metropolis, brought the Irish question home to the cockney mind as it had never been brought home before. The public was prepared for anything that would remove the cause of its alarm. Hence statesmen who thought just previously that the Irish Church question was a question of the future, suddenly found it possible to convert it into the question of the day. So late as 1865, Mr. Gladstone, in a letter to a Dr. Hannah, referring to the interpretation put upon one of his speeches, used the following expressions: "The question is remote and apparently out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day." "One thing, however, I may add, because I think it is a clear landmark. In any measure dealing with the Irish Church, I think (although I scarcely ever expect to be called on to share in such a measure) the Act of Union must be recognised, and must have important consequences, especially with reference to the position of the Hierarchy." Had some prophet



then met him, and looked at him steadfastly, as Elisha looked upon Hazael, "until he was ashamed," and told him he should himself lay the axe to the root of what he afterwards termed the great tree of Protestant ascendancy, he would probably like the Syrian, whom he so little resembled, except in this respect, have utterly denied that it could so happen. Neither by him nor by any one else might it have been foreseen that this generation would be called on to deal with a question which it was supposed would occupy attention, and be made the subject of debate in the parliament, of two or three generations to come. During the year in which the letter we have quoted from was written, there was a debate on the motion of Mr. Maguire, which showed how unprepared public men were then to grapple with the question. Sir George Grey said, that the Irish Church Establishment could not be overthrown without causing a revolution in the country. Mr. Gladstone was more guarded in his language, but treated the subject with coldness and reserve; hinting that the tithe rent charge would remain with the landlords, if no longer paid to the clergy. Even if the country had been prepared, as it afterwards was by Fenianism, for some violent measure, the great question of Parliamentary Reform filled the entire political field, and made the introduction upon it of another subject equally vast, a complete impossibility. In the following year (1866), on the failure of Mr. Gladstone to carry his Reform bill, Lord Derby was called to power; and on the ground that it was better to let in a great mass of voters composed of all shades of opinion, rather than a single stratum known to be extremely democratic, he introduced the Household Suffrage Reform bill, which, by the unwilling co-operation of both parties, passed into law. The public mind having thus a great load removed, was prepared for a fresh burden. A Royal Commission was moved for, to inquire into the state of the Irish Church; but Lord Derby insisted that the inquiry should be of a friendly nature, as to how it could be rendered more effective, by the better disposal of its revenues. Could he have foreseen what would happen, and what he should live long enough to see, the Conservative leader would have consented to an unfettered inquiry; for having refused the impartial trial offered, the Establishment was afterwards condemned unheard, and dealt with more severely than a Commission would in all probability have recommended. Thus 1867 passed away, and in February 1868 Lord Derby withdrew from the ministry, and Mr. Disraeli became premier. Ireland then engrossed universal attention; Fenian alarms filled the air; the public looked to statesmen for some measure which should destroy Fenianism by removing its cause. Such a state of mind made it necessary for Mr. Disraeli to strike out an Irish policy, and inquiries were instituted as to what measures would be accepted by the Roman Catholic church. It was rumoured that its supreme head was in favour of an endowment for the priesthood; and other concessions were said to be in contemplation by the cabinet. Accordingly Lord Mayo, the able Irish minister of Mr. Disraeli's government, in a speech of considerable length, projected the shadow rather than the distinct reflection of an Irish policy.

Parliament was made to see a dim outline of a land scheme, an education scheme, and a church scheme. The latter was supposed to be based on the plan of "levelling up"—that is, instead of pulling down

the Irish church, raising other religious denominations to a position of equality. Scarcely had this shadow appeared, when a furious rush was made upon it from all sides of the house. The Irish nationalists resented the idea of the government buying over their church; the church resented the obvious intention with which it was to be bought—of making it the tool of England; or, what was still more likely, destroying its influence. The English radicals were furious at the suggestion of taking a step back from the advance they had made towards voluntarism,—a step, moreover, that would make any further progress impossible until it should have been itself retraced. Having once endowed the Church of Rome, it would be impossible for a Protestant country, without an appearance of persecution, to disendow it again. Thus its endowment would have proved an impregnable defence to the Anglican Church. The Whigs or intellectual liberals, and the similar element on the conservative side, would have been in favour of this policy; but the whole stupidity of the country was opposed to it, and the stupidity of England is omnipotent whenever it happens to be unanimous. Even the Irish Roman Catholic members, contrary to their convictions, were bound to be faithful to their alliance with the radicals, and to refuse to accept the bribe that was held out. Hence the furious rush made upon the shadow of general endowment, which the assailants tried to insist was a reality, and Lord Mayo had considerable difficulty in proving was only a shadow. But of what the shadow, if not of indiscriminate endowment? This was easily explained; it portended a measure which should place the Roman Catholic chaplains of jails and workhouses on a better footing; but nothing more was heard of this, as it was found on inquiry that they were most liberally dealt with in such institutions. We cannot indeed doubt that Mr. Disraeli's idea was to make a late fulfilment of Mr. Pitt's broken pledge; and though the amount of money that would have been required to carry out that scheme would have been immense, it would not have been more (probably less) than what is contributed by different religious denominations to maintain their various forms of public worship. But a partial application of the equalising principle would have been worse than none. To touch an injustice and leave half of it, is to reaffirm what is left and inflict a new wrong. It is impossible to say now whether the ministry would have gone the whole length in this course of high policy, or would have come forward with only "part of the price." A concession was intended to the objection of the Roman Catholic bishops to the youth of their persuasion being obliged, in order to obtaining degrees, to pass through Protestant or secular colleges. Considerable ground being thus given on three questions, the educational, the religious, and that connected with the land, the liberal party had to consider on which of the three it would fight the forthcoming election. It was of vital importance to the opposition to introduce some great question, which should have the effect of clearing opinion in the new body of electors. It was certain that rank and wealth would have more chance of influencing the new than the old constituency, and hence the need of a distinct political issue, which would make it impossible for any man to deceive himself, or to be driven and tossed by the wind of *local* opinion. Parties were disorganized and mixed—it was there-



fore expedient to select that question which held out most prospect of uniting the liberal party and restoring habits of discipline. To have introduced a land bill, going further than Lord Mayo's, would have made a hopeless disruption in the party; and probably in the great election approaching, would have forfeited the support of the Whigs. Success was needed to rouse the drooping spirits of the majority, and restore its confidence in its leaders;—failure would have been the inevitable result of a radical land bill. Nor was the university education question more to the purpose, as, besides being too trivial and indistinct, liberal officialism was not supposed to be agreed on this subject with unofficial liberalism. Hence the overthrow of the church was chosen as the object to set before the country, in the proceedings of the expiring parliament. It was possible that previous to the election the Conservatives might be induced by a signal defeat to give up to their opponents the vantage ground of office; the more so as an appeal to the old constituency was not to be thought of. It was on the 23d of March 1868, that Mr. Gladstone gave notice of his intention to move the following resolutions: 1st, that in the opinion of this House it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an Establishment, due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property; 2dly, that, subject to the foregoing considerations, it is expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any public patronage, and to confine the operations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of Ireland to objects of immediate necessity, or involving individual rights, pending the final decision of parliament; and, 3dly, that with a view to the purposes aforesaid, her Majesty be graciously pleased to place at the disposal of parliament her interest in the temporalities of the archbishoprics and bishoprics, and other ecclesiastical dignities and benefices in Ireland and in the custodies thereof. The debate commenced on the 30th, and Lord Stanley moved as an amendment, "that this House, while admitting that considerable modification in the temporalities of the United Church in Ireland may, after impending inquiry" (an allusion to the Church Commission), "appear to be expedient, is of opinion that any proposition tending to the disestablishment or disendowment of that Church ought to be reserved for the decision of the new parliament." This amendment was denounced by Lord Cranbourne as treacherous, and certainly was cooler than pleased a majority of the Conservative party. A direct and emphatic No would have been preferred by the supporters of the ministry, and in our opinion would have been more judicious, and have had an effect on the country favourable to the Conservative policy. The amendment sounded heartless—as if the cause was already lost—and the only object had been to gain time, perhaps for some anticipatory measure. So it sounded to the country; while it produced blank dismay amongst Irish churchmen. Mr. Gathorne Hardy, by a vigorous speech, in which he denounced the resolutions as an attack upon the rights of property, somewhat revived the spirits of his party. The Premier, alluding to the member for Calne's announcement of the hour and the man, said that the clock was wrong, and the man was not 'fit.' He compared Mr. Gladstone, with his sudden onslaught on the Church, to a thief in the night,

and expressed belief in a combination between the High Church Ritualists and the Irish followers of the Pope, to overthrow the Constitution of England, and lay hands upon the Crown itself. Mr. Gladstone, in reply, ascribed this statement to an over-heated imagination. A rather passionate debate terminated in a majority against the Government of 61, in a house of 601 members; and the discussion in Committee, which lasted eleven nights, ended in a still more decisive division, 330 to 265—giving the Opposition a majority of 65. On the 4th of May, in consequence of these divisions, Lord Malmesbury and Mr. Disraeli made the following ministerial explanation—That not feeling they could with honour accept the recent decision, they had tendered their resignations. That the Queen had expressed her willingness to dissolve, but Mr. Disraeli thought it would be better to make the appeal to the new constituencies in the autumn of that year (1868), and with this view the work of preparing the electoral lists would be carried on with the utmost speed. If, therefore, the House would enable the Ministry to carry on business, the appeal, to which they had a fair claim before admitting themselves really defeated, would not be made until the natural death of the old parliament.

This explanation was not altogether satisfactory to the victorious party, who found their victory barren of immediate results, though not of the great result aimed at by the leaders, which was to engage the public mind with the subject before the election came on. It was putting before the country, while conceiving a new parliament, the image of what the liberals desired it should bring forth. But not only did it not restore them to the right of the Speaker's chair, but the defeat was so used by the defeated leader as to preclude his opponents from attaining that position for the remainder of the session, in spite of their possession of a re-united majority. It was only a defeat upon so great and so new a question that could have given Mr. Disraeli the right to hold a dissolution over the head of a parliament within a few months of its expiring; whereas, without such a defeat, inability to carry on the government must have compelled him to resign. It was a perfectly fair and very clever use of a great overthrow. On one side, the object was gained of having during the general election the advantage of being in office; on the other, that of making a tremendous impression on the public mind. The second and third resolutions were carried without a division; and, with the exception of a rough passage of arms between Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Bright, which arose out of some difference in the liberal party with regard to the Maynooth grant, no other incident occurred. In accordance with the third resolution, an address was presented to the Queen; to which Her Majesty replied, that her interest in the temporalities of the Irish Church should not stand in the way of Parliament in the consideration of a measure. On the 14th, Mr. Gladstone brought in a Bill to suspend the exercise of public patronage, which went easily through all its stages in the House of Commons, and was carried to the Lords, on the 25th of June, by Earl Granville. The Peers threw out the bill, after a debate which lasted for three nights, the majority against it being 95, in a house of 289. The reasons for its rejection were decisive, although they did not at all touch the question of the propriety of its introduction. The old parliament



could not claim to represent the new constituencies which had not as yet pronounced a decision on the question that would have been prejudged by the adoption of the bill. As Mr. Disraeli said, the existing House of Commons was scarcely competent to pass such a measure, having, in fact, abdicated power, and only performing the functions of its office until a successor could be called together in its room. The Lords were the only permanent part of the legislature; and standing between the old constituencies and the new, were bound to reserve judgment for the latter. Then ensued some months of furious controversy—some months of civil war, in which the knights fought in modern fashion, with pens instead of lances, and expended ink instead of blood, and the results of the war were quite as decisive. The clergy of England made one cause with their brethren in Ireland, and it was common to hear Mr. Gladstone compared, from the pulpit, to Judas Iscariot, Pontius Pilate, and the robber Barabbas. But towards the close of the year the great election campaign commenced in earnest. As Mr. Bright said at Edinburgh, "There is a great battle going on at this moment, and, without exaggeration, one may say that it is a battle 'with confused noise,' though it is not a battle like that which the prophet described, 'with garments rolled in blood.' There is a confused noise throughout the country from John O'Groat's to Land's End; all over Great Britain and Ireland men are discussing great questions." On the 19th of November, Mr. Gladstone was able to say to the constituents at the South Lancashire nomination, "The battle of this election is already fought and won. I ask you, therefore, gentlemen, not to separate yourselves from the body of the nation; you are part of England; you are great, but England is greater. With England Scotland joins, and with Scotland Ireland." True, the Conservatives carried all Lancashire, and Mr. Gladstone was driven to take refuge at Greenwich; they won in some great constituencies where they never before would have had a chance, even in Westminster itself; they were on the whole successful in the counties; but, on the other hand, the Liberals stormed several Conservative strongholds, such as Dublin, Belfast, and Londonderry; were triumphant in many small, hitherto Tory burghs; were great gainers in Wales, and completely victorious in Scotland. The ultimate result was a majority of over 120 in favour of Mr. Gladstone; and, as soon as it became clear that the elections would so terminate, the Conservative Government resigned. On the 2d of December Mr. Disraeli addressed a statement to the London newspapers, as parliament was not sitting. After noting the favourable decisions of vast constituencies, he acknowledged that it was obvious the Government would not command the confidence of the new parliament, and announced that accordingly they considered it their duty to resign office. Mr. Gladstone was called upon by Her Majesty to form a ministry; and the new Cabinet, which included Messrs. Bright and Lowe, was soon installed in office. One of its first acts was to refuse the prayer of the Irish bishops that the convocation of the provinces of Armagh and Dublin might be permitted to assemble. It was probably considered inexpedient to give the menaced Church an opportunity of uttering useless protests similar to that which shortly after issued from the English convocation in the shape of an address to the Crown. The householder

parliament met on the 16th of February, and on the 1st of March Mr. Gladstone made the statement of which he had given notice on the first day of the session. The Government proposed to vest the whole property of the Irish Church in a Commission, consisting of three members, appointed for ten years, to wind up its affairs. The date of disestablishment was to be the 1st of January (1871), after which no Archbishop or Bishop of the disestablished church should sit in the House of Lords. The first trust of the Commission was to be the paying of life incomes to the bishops and clergy so long as they discharged the duties of their offices. Power was to be given to the recipients to commute this life income for a fixed sum, which should be handed over to such church body as might be formed, charged with the same trust, but with power to re-arrange duties and economise resources. The Church was to be left all private endowments since 1660; and the fabrics of the churches as being unmarketable, and the glebe houses after the payment of building charges and provided there was an undertaking to keep them in repair, were to be handed over to the new corporation. With regard to the Presbyterian Church, the occupants of professorships endowed by parliament, and ministers receiving the *Regium Donum*, were also to have the power to commute their life incomes, and the General Assembly and the trustees of Maynooth to have fourteen times the sum annually voted in discharge of their claims. The tithe rent charge was to be sold to the landlords at  $22\frac{1}{2}$  years' purchase, and the sum vested in the Church Commission. The surplus, after paying all claims, was to be devoted to maintaining pauper lunatic asylums, idiot asylums, infirmaries and hospitals for the poor, previously maintained by county cess. It was calculated that the commuted tithe rent charge would produce £9,000,000; lands and perpetuity rents, £6,200,000; money, £750,000: making a total of £15,950,000. The charges on this were estimated as follows:—

Commuted life-interest of bishops and incumbents,	£4,900,000
Compensation to curates,	800,000
Lay compensation,	900,000
Private endowments to be repaid,	500,000
Building charges,	250,000
Presbyterians and Maynooth (in the proportions of two-thirds and one-third),	1,100,000
College Expenses of Presbyterians and Catholics,	35,000
Expense of Commission,	200,000
Making a Total of	£8,685,000

Thus leaving about £7,500,000 for Irish national purposes,—the annual interest on which surplus would be £311,000. Mr. Gladstone compared the dread with which the prospect of disestablishment and disendowment was regarded by many to that inspired by Edgar in his uncle Gloucester, whom he persuaded that he had fallen over the cliffs of Dover,—

“Ten masts on each make not the altitude  
Which thou has perpendicularly fell:  
Thy life's a miracle;”

but the old man soon discovers that it is a delusion, and that he has not fallen at all.



Mr. Disraeli followed, and declared that his party would resist the measure to the utmost of their ability,—looking on disestablishment as a grave political error, and disendowment as sheer confiscation. On the second reading (March 18), he made a most ingenious and able speech, which, for the moment, produced a decided impression on the country. He charged the Government with bribing the landowners to assist it in overthrowing their own church. One discontented priesthood had wrought evil enough in Ireland; by this bill there would be three instead of one smarting under ill-treatment. A middle class was wanting: this bill would destroy it; residents were needed: this would drive them away; the curse of Ireland was poverty: and this confiscated property. The Irish had suffered from repeated forfeitures: this was forfeiture without a pretext—the old policy of tyranny and oppression in the darkest ages. He complained of the suddenness of the bill, its anomalies, the hardships it would inflict; and declared that its precedent would lead to a revolution in England, and the overthrow of the English Church. On the Liberal side, only the leaders spoke; it was considered unnecessary to discuss an issue on which the country had so emphatically pronounced its will,—though it was denied by the Conservatives that so harsh a measure would ever have received its sanction. Mr. Bright made a memorable speech, and the debate was concluded by Mr. Gladstone. “As that clock’s hand,” he said, “moves rapidly towards the dawn, so are rapidly flowing out the years, the months, the days that remain to the existence of the Irish Established Church.” The second reading was carried by a majority of 118,—the numbers being 368 to 250. Meanwhile, a conference of the Irish Church was being held in Dublin, at which it was resolved to offer the bill an uncompromising opposition. But such opposition was of no avail; it passed through committee with little alteration. Mr. Disraeli proposed a series of amendments; the first of which was for the omission of the disestablishing clause, leaving the church under the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts and the supremacy of the Crown, in which official appointments would still be vested, on the plea that this was necessary to maintaining true ecclesiastical union with the English Church, and true ecclesiastical equality with the Roman. The Irish Roman Catholic Church had a buttress in Rome which the Protestant Church should find in England. This amendment was rejected by 123 votes. The amendments upon the disendowment scheme, Mr. Gladstone said, in the debate on the third reading, would have left the Irish Church like the patriarch Job, richer at the end than at the beginning. The smallest ministerial majority was 98, against Sir Roundel Palmer’s amendment, to give separate compensation to permanent curates; and on the third reading the majority was 114.

So far the Irish Church Bill had had a prosperous existence; but now it passed into the hands of a hostile assembly, in which even the Whig Peers were averse to it; an assembly in which nearly all were sound Churchmen, and, as the possessors of privileges and titles and immense landed property, bitterly opposed to revolutionary change; in which the bishops themselves formed a powerful and brilliant group. A council of war was held at the Duke of Marlborough’s, where it was resolved by the Conservative Peers to throw out the bill on the second

reading, and the Earl of Harrowby was chosen to move its rejection. Lords Salisbury, Carnarvon, and Stanhope, however, dissented from this extreme course; and by their speeches in the debate which ensued on Lord Harrowby's motion, assisted by the wise and powerful speeches of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop Thirlwall, saved the bill from being summarily rejected. On the other side, in favour of its rejection, the Bishop of Peterborough made a speech, of which Lord Derby said that it had never in his experience been excelled, and rarely equalled. The debate will also be remembered for the touching peroration of Lord Derby's own speech—almost his last words in the House—"My official life is ended; my political life is nearly over; the term of my natural life is approaching; it is therefore with a full sense of my responsibility that I oppose this bill." Throughout the debate the uppermost opinion was that in favour of concurrent endowment—a scheme which Lord Russell had strongly advocated in a series of letters addressed to Mr. Chichester Fortescue (1868-9). The morning's sun was shining when the Lords divided, after three nights of debate; and not, as in the House of Commons, where, on any matter of a party nature, the division-list might be made out with tolerable accuracy beforehand, it was completely in doubt whether the bill would be summarily thrown back into the face of the country, or whether the opinion which Lord Salisbury had expressed and Lord Granville had cheered, that the Government would accept considerable amendment, would prevail with the House to make it give the measure a further consideration. The result was a majority of 33 in favour of the bill, the numbers being 179 to 146. Then came a long series of amendments. The Archbishop of Canterbury moved that the date of disestablishment should be January 1, 1872; Lord Clancarty, that the bishops should retain their seats for life; the Bishop of Peterborough, that annuities should be freed from the tax to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, effecting a saving of £19,000 to the Church; Lord Salisbury, that curates' salaries should not be deducted from life-interests; Lord Carnarvon, that life-interests should, as in the case of Maynooth, be valued at fourteen years' purchase. These amendments were all carried by large majorities. With respect to glebes and glebe-houses, a compromise was proposed whereby the Church was to retain them in consideration of the Presbyterian ministers and Roman Catholic priests being provided with houses and ten acres of land each. This amendment was unfortunately divided into two parts,—the first part, that the glebes should be retained, being carried: the second part, proposed by the Duke of Cleveland, that the other two churches should be raised to an equality in this respect, being rejected by a coalition of extremes against moderates, most of the English bishops voting with the minority. When the question came on as to the date from which private endowments should belong to the Church, the Government offered, as a compromise, a sum of £500,000 in lieu of all; but this offer was not, owing to its suddenness, at once accepted; and the Bishop of Derry having carried an amendment that the Ulster glebes should be retained by the Church, it was withdrawn by the ministerial leader. Lord Cairns, who had been the author of a great number of amendments of wording and detail, carried, by a large majority, a motion to



delay the disposal of the surplus *sine die*. The bill passed a third reading on the 12th of July; and before it was returned to the Commons, the Lords reversed two of their previous decisions, deciding that the Irish Bishops should not retain their seats, and introducing, by a majority of 7, equality with respect to glebes. Thus amended, the bill went down; but from the moment that concurrent endowment was carried, the amendments of the Upper House were doomed, the support of the country was entirely forfeited, and there was no longer a case with which the Conservative party could dare to face the constituencies. The wise and moderate men in the House of Lords, who thus recorded their opinion in favour of concurrent endowment, thought too much of the justice and generosity and wisdom of such a policy, and too little of the prejudices of the nation. Those who had not merely to legislate, but to govern, knew better than to compromise themselves by supporting such an unpopular proposal; and Lord Cairns and Mr. Disraeli on the one side, and Lord Granville and Mr. Gladstone on the other, were equally opposed to it. It was the concurrent-endowment amendment that made Mr. Gladstone absolute master of the position; on the 15th of July he proposed that the Commons should disagree to all the amendments of the slightest importance proposed by the Lords,—only on three points making trifling concessions, viz., renewing the offer of £500,000 in lieu of all private endowments, to many of which it would have been impracticable or enormously costly for the church to establish her claim; a slight change with regard to the deduction of curates' salaries, which, Lord Cairns said, made the bill worse than before; and an addition of 7 per cent. to the amount of commutation originally proposed, clergymen's lives being, on an average, 7 per cent. better than other people's. The words in the preamble declaring that the surplus should be devoted to no religious purposes, which had been struck out by the House of Lords, were again inserted; and Mr. Bright having been charged by Dr. Ball with the parentage of the scheme of concurrent endowment, which those words had been struck out to admit, allowed that it was the fruit of a youthful imprudence, but would not support his child, because it was in such bad repute with the country. "We hear by every post," he said, "that the Protestants of Ireland would rather go out naked on the hill-side than hand over any portion of the funds of the Irish Church to the Roman Catholics. If I were in favour of religious endowment, I should be ashamed of such a sentiment." Mr. Gladstone, he said, had greater power than any prime minister of whom he had known anything; but his "power and influence would break and shiver like a broken glass if he were to propose to endow the Roman Catholic Church." As Sir Roundell Palmer said, by this admission he tore the mask from the face of those who cry, "justice to Ireland," but whom nothing would induce to do justice as the Irish would most like it to be done, by conciliating their church.

The bill, thus re-amended and restored, was sent back to the House of Lords, where the wholesale rejection of their proposals excited great indignation. The wording of the preamble came before the House in the first instance, and Lord Granville in vain asked that the two issues which it involved should be taken separately,—1st, whether the dis-

posal of the surplus should be retained in the hands of Parliament ; 2dly, whether it should be declared that it was not to be applied to religious purposes. The result of the division was a majority of 78 against the retention of the words as to religious uses. Lord Granville considered that this vote, or, rather, the temper which it manifested in the Peers to insist on their amendments, made it necessary for the Government to consider their position, and accordingly, for this purpose, moved the adjournment of the debate. By adopting such a course, he gave an opportunity to the Peers also, ere they had irrevocably committed themselves, to think better of the course upon which they were entering, and possibly see the wisdom of resting satisfied with the vindication of their independence in the vote on the preamble. A most excellent effect was produced by the adjournment. It was generally said and believed that Government would withdraw the bill, and bring it in again in an autumn session, after a tremendous popular agitation,—a prospect so unpleasant to the Peers, that a strong desire for some honourable way out of the situation in which they were placed completely superseded the indignation with which they had at first received the rejection of their amendments. On the resumption of the debate, Lord Granville informed the House that the Government would not assume the responsibility of withdrawing the bill ; and it was then that Lord Cairns rose and explained that, without consultation with the other leaders, for which there was no time, he had taken upon himself, as leader of the Opposition, to arrange the terms of a compromise, which he proceeded to explain to their lordships. The date of disestablishment was to be January 1, 1871 ; the deduction for curates was only to be made when such deduction had already been made from the ecclesiastical tax for five years previously ; diocesan commutation was to be decided by the votes of three-fourths instead of four-fifths ; and there was to be an addition of 12 instead of 7 per cent. to the tabulated life-interests ; glebe-houses and lands might be excepted from the commutation during the life of incumbents ; the preamble was to remain as their Lordships' vote left it, but the 68th clause was to provide that the surplus should be applied to the relief of unavoidable calamity (not, however, to impair the obligations attached to property under the Acts for the relief of the poor), and that it should be distributed as Parliament might hereafter direct. This compromise, which it was supposed had been made on the suggestion of Mr. Disraeli, was accepted by all parties as a happy termination of the controversy, and, on the 23d of June, the Lords' amendments were agreed to by the Commons.

Many of the objections to this great measure have in its operation proved to be groundless ; but not for a generation or two will it be seen whether its effects are entirely beneficial. Beyond all question, it was a measure of confiscation. It would have been different if, in a Protestant country, the Protestant Church had been stripped of its possessions ; because then the funds, though differently employed, would not have been diverted from the original owners, viz., the Protestant population. But here the property of 700,000 Protestants was turned to the use of the *whole* population, which was Roman Catholic in the proportion of 5 to 1 ; so that henceforth the original owners had only one-fifth of their own property. If they had been given the whole



value of it—say, £16,000,000—in ready money, it would have amounted to £23 a-piece; and they could not invest it better than by returning it to its first use,—by doing which there would continue to be a number of respectable posts for their children to fill, and they would never more have to contribute to the support of priest or minister.

The Irish Church Act 1869 (32 & 33 Vic. cap. 42), took its place on the 26th of July, for better or for worse, upon the statute book of England. English and Scotch readers are not in a position to understand how extremely bitter it proved to Irish Protestants. This bitterness was not occasioned by the pecuniary loss which it entailed, nor by the anticipation of being deprived, in many parts of the country, of the ministrations of the clergy; but chiefly by the humiliation and defeat to themselves which the measure involved. It was a revolution in which the weak had conquered the strong—in which the conquered had not been permitted to defend their rights, and the gall and bitterness had not, as in violent revolutions, been borne away on the blood shed. The defeated party refused all comfort: the promise that their church would do ten times the work it had done hitherto—would have no dead and rotting branches, but in every part be sound and healthy, and the envy of English Churchmen, was regarded as no consolation whatever. The assurance that its voluntary resources would surpass those revenues of which it had been deprived, and that the contribution of them would bind the contributors to the institution they themselves supported faster than they had ever been bound to a church depending on the state for its support, was angrily rejected, as if it had been an additional insult. It was the bitter and insupportable wrong and humiliation put upon them by the intent with which the measure was carried, and not the misfortune of their church that afflicted the Protestant laity. It is impossible, unless we belong to the victorious side, not to sympathise with the defeated minority; who, if they had before occupied a false position, had been put into it by their English brethren, who did so for their own ends; and for their own ends tore them down from it, with a suddenness and violence unparalleled in history. Never was the Protestantism of England and Scotland so strong, never was there a more intolerant hatred of the Church of Rome (not of that church's doctrines and ceremonies, but of herself), than was then prevalent; never had the Protestant clergy of Ireland been half so energetic and efficient. Mr. Miall and the Liberation Society, Sir John Gray and the "Freeman's Journal," could only raise wind enough to fill the sails of the Irish Church and make it glide upon its way more prosperously, and more successfully fulfil its mission. The people of Ireland, wholly taken up with the land question, could not be roused on the subject of the Church. All was fair sailing, when, suddenly, the leaders of the Liberal party saw that Fenianism had put into their power to overthrow the Irish Establishment, and, by so doing, as they believed, afford great satisfaction to the Irish people, and assure them of the redress of their grievances. Accordingly the sentence went forth; and before the Protestants of Ireland could believe or realize what was being done, the task was actually accomplished; and their church was disestablished and disendowed, not to carry out the principles of the Liberation Society, but expressly with the intent of taking

the Protestants down from their ascendant position. It was the intent with which the measure was carried out, rather than the measure itself, that so bitterly rankled in their breasts. If Mr. Miall had been the hero of the fight—if the issue had been between the principle of voluntarism and the principle of establishment, and the Churches of England and Scotland were equally involved, it is not beyond belief that the measure actually carried would have been supported by some, and but faintly resisted by many, of the Irish Protestant laity. But the victor was not Mr. Miall; the Liberation Society and its principles were purposely kept in the background, in order that the Church of England might not be unnecessarily alarmed, and that the graciousness of the boon to the Church of Rome might not be diminished;—the undoubted conqueror was Cardinal Cullen, and the victorious party the Roman Catholics of Ireland. The virtue of the measure was openly made to consist in the triumph of the Roman Catholics over the Protestants; and it was this that very naturally caused among the latter an intense resentment. After seeing the rise and progress of the measure in England, the passage and defeat of the suspensory bill, the stormy election of 1868, the introduction of the measure, the rapid fighting of it through the Commons, and the great deliberations in the House of Lords; the angry and dangerous interval, and the peaceful termination to the dispute, and the royal assent, which the very introduction of the measure involved as a foregone conclusion should it pass, we happened, at the very moment of the completion of the parliamentary struggle, to cross over to Ireland, out of the calm atmosphere of England; and were strongly impressed with the reality of those incensed feelings and violent passions which from a distance we had regarded as assumed. Such feelings, however, subside in the course of a few years,—the anger of the vanquished, the triumph of the victor; the measure remains, with its bare practical effect, whatever that may be. And no doubt, as Mr. Gladstone said in his last eloquent speech on the subject, those who have indulged in the gloomiest predictions will now do their utmost that those predictions may not be fulfilled.

---

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN IRELAND.

Defence Conference.—Jealousy of Bishops and Clergy.—General Synod of Dublin.—Diocesan Synod.—Archbishop withdraws.—Reconciliation.—Draft of Constitution.—Effort to Overthrow Episcopacy.

ON the passing of the Irish Church Bill, which for five months occupied and overshadowed parliament, the disestablished church set to work to reconstitute itself with much energy. It was proposed to call together the conference which had been elected for the political purpose of opposing the passage of Mr Gladstone's measure, to initiate the work of reconstruction. This, which was urged by the Protestant De-



fence Association, and was probably the wish of the greater proportion of the laity, was opposed by the clergy, who felt how very unfit so rough and ready a body would be to meddle with such a delicate task. The whole process of reconstruction was marked by a decided jealousy between the clergy and laity; the most prominent representative of the feeling among the latter being Lord James Butler, who early took his stand upon the theory that the clergy were only the handsomely paid servants of the laity, who were entitled to treat them as subordinates, and give them little, if any, share in the deliberations. Jealousy of the bishops was constantly displayed in efforts to limit their power and deprive them of their weight as a separate order; while on the other hand the bishops and clergy were determined to maintain the position they already held in the Catholic Church, not from any real difference between their views of their own status and Lord James Butler's, nor from any sacerdotal theory, but from professional feeling. Fortunately, however, the bill had given the church a groove to run in, and the extreme low church party were not able to have it all their own way: as in that case there would probably have resulted an internal schism infinitely more lamentable than outward separation from the State. The archbishops and bishops held a meeting in Dublin, at which it was determined to summon a general synod, in which the clergy and laity should be fully and equally represented. At the same time it was announced to the very great discontent of many, that it had been determined not to re-assemble the conference which had purposely been composed of the most violently explosive materials. The general synod of the Irish Church, resulting from the union of the provincial synods of Armagh and Leinster, met in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, in September 1869. Beginning with a protest against the late bill, the synod lost no time in proceeding to more practical matters. The opinion of the laity as to the constitution of the church body, was expressed by a lay conference which met on its own authority, and declared itself in favour of the laity being to the clergy as two to one, and the qualification for electors and delegates being simply a declaration of their being members of the church, even though not communicants, or even in accord with it in doctrines. Indeed, one of the first results of the unshackling of the church was to show how great was the dislike to the distinctive church teaching of the prayer-book, how completely the laity had drifted away from their religious moorings,—a fact which was apparently accounted for by the theory that these moorings had drifted away from them, and must be brought back to the position at present occupied by the bulk of the professing members of the church. The movement for the revision of the prayer-book gained considerable strength, and formed the first object of the low church party in the synod; to put the laity above the clergy, and to lessen the power of the prelates being the second object they aimed at accomplishing. The questions of voting by orders and of the proportion of lay to clerical representation were the first disputed points to be settled. The Archbishop of Dublin, in his charge immediately following the passing of the bill, noticed the connection of the questions. If the representation were equal, the right of separate voting would seldom be exercised;

but if the clergy were in a hopeless minority, the right would be perpetually resorted to, and would cause a widening divergence; and the primate of Ireland issued a mandate that the representation should be equal in the province of Armagh. When, however, the Dublin Diocesan Synod met at the end of November for the election of delegates to the church convention, to which was to be referred all questions connected with the future organisation of the church, an effort was made to discuss the question of lay representation, and firmly opposed by Archbishop Trench, who was at last, however, obliged to adjourn the meeting—expressing his intention of presiding no more, and advising the withdrawal of his clergy. The next meeting was held under the presidency of Master Brooke, when various resolutions were passed, putting forward the lay view of reconstruction, including the principle of the election of two lay delegates to one clerical. Fortunately, however, the minority of the synod did not persist in its attitude to the archbishop, who was warmly received at the next meeting. In January a committee of organisation, elected from the twelve bishoprics or archbishoprics of Ireland, each returning two clerical and two lay representatives, was held in Dublin, to prepare a draft of the future constitution of the church. The draft drawn up by this committee defined the composition of the general synod to be a house of bishops and a house of representatives, the latter consisting of 250 members, 100 clergy and 150 laymen, apportioned between the different dioceses, with but little reference to their relative church populations, and elected by all communicants above the age of twenty-one. Optional voting by orders was also recommended; and it was advised that no change should be made in the articles or prayer book, except by a bill carried by a vote of two-thirds of each order. The draft further recommended diocesan synods, presided over by the bishops, and a representative body to hold and administer church property, and to consist of the prelates and one lay and one clerical representative of each bishopric chosen by the general synod; the lay members each selecting a second lay member; and one third of this church body to retire every three years. The other sections of the draft related to the distribution of patronage, election of bishops, and discipline and finance. The convention began its meetings in February 1870. The first debate was raised on the separate vote of the prelates, to whom it would give the power as a council of twelve to strangle the will of all the rest of the church; and this power was opposed by the low church party who feared a fatal check on their contemplated alterations of doctrinal standards, as well as by a small portion of the high church section, including the able Dean of Down (Woodward.) The bishops, under the eloquent leadership of Bishop Alexander, made a firm defence of their power of veto; but so strong was the tide of opinion against it in a portion of the convention, that if put to the vote and carried in the teeth of the objectors, it was feared a decided split would be the result. The interposition of the Duke of Abercorn, who through all the discussions of the convention did most admirable service by moderating between parties, prevented the question being put to the meeting. He moved that any question carried by majorities of the orders should pass, unless seven of the twelve bishops (reduced to



eleven by the death of the Bishop of Kilmore) should concur in a dissentient vote. This amendment was agreed to. Generally speaking, the draft constitution was agreed to by the convention, and the fundamental differences which at one time had threatened to make a schism in the disestablished church, were, at all events, deferred.

One grey buttress of the Irish establishment remained, when the rest lay in ruins; and to take it down safely without waiting for it to fall, and crush those beneath it, was only wise. It was determined by the Board of Trinity College, Dublin, to assent to Mr Fawcett's bill for throwing open the university. The representatives of the university were instructed to support it, and when it was introduced by Professor Fawcett in March (1870) Mr Plunket, grandson of the first Lord Plunket, in a maiden speech of great eloquence, which drew a high compliment from the premier, who answered him with great vivacity and at considerable length, supported the abolition of tests, and showed that it was only the final step of a liberal policy that had long been in progress in the Dublin University. The Government, however, considered the question one which they were bound to take up themselves at a future time, meanwhile accepting as irrevocable the concession offered by the board.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LAND BILL.

Expectations Excited by Church Bill.—Increase of Agrarian Outrages.—Coercion Bill.—Fixity of Tenure.—Provisions of Land Bill.—How Received.—Aims.—Increased Activity of Ribbonism.—Delay of Government.—Committee.—Bill for Partial Suspension of Habeas Corpus.

IN Mr Gladstone's famous speeches in Lancashire, preceding the election of 1868, he made three promises to Ireland: one of these was now fulfilled. But the policy of applying the axe so thoroughly to the root of the Church before dealing with the land and education questions, was probably not the best if it had been possible to choose otherwise. The Church bill coming first aroused exorbitant expectations. It was impossible to deal with the other subjects so thoroughly; public opinion would not sanction it; but this was far from being recognised in Ireland; nothing less was expected than that the landlords would share the fate of the clerical hierarchy, and be disendowed and disestablished. But it was not remembered that it was a very different thing, the gentry being required to do this for their younger brothers who had entered the sacred ministry, and being asked to do it for themselves. The consequence of this want of perception was, that looking to nothing less than absolute fixity of tenure, the tenant farmers were less than ever inclined to permit an invasion on the part of the landlords of what they deemed equitable rights—rights on the point of being legalised. Hold on a few months; terrify the land-

lords into leaving things as they were for the present, and the law of the land would prevent, what now they were only anticipating the law in restraining.

In Tipperary, the tenantry on some estates showed an unusual unwillingness to pay rent, being under the belief that Mr Gladstone was going to relieve them altogether from the unpleasant necessity. All this was very unfortunate for the Government; it would probably have been much the same in any case; but the precedence of the church bill certainly made it worse. It discredited the policy of conciliation on which England was so bent, when Mr Gladstone was given a majority of more than a hundred to do what he pleased with; and it must have wounded and disappointed the minister. The increase in the number of agrarian outrages became most alarming. In deference to English public opinion, and the outcry of the Irish landlords who went in fear of their lives, the Government felt obliged to do something. The number of serious agrarian offences in 1847, from March to October, when famine drove the people wild, was 96 homicides, 126 cases of firing at the person, 116 of firing into dwellings. In the year 1852, when the consequences of that terrible ordeal began to develop the resistance which a people, passionately attached to the soil, made to being driven into exile, by half ruined, or still worse, by new and untried landlords, was only represented by 907 outrages. The battle was won however; the miserable people were driven across the Atlantic, and agrarian offences fell to a minimum in 1866 when there were only 6. The number of crimes connected with the tenure of land in the three following years was as follows—

1867, number of offences	123
1868,       "       "	170
1869,       "       "	767

This tremendous bound, not justified by any such events as the famine, the fever, and the Great Eviction, but at a time when Ireland was unusually prosperous and the people seldom or ever disturbed in their holdings, could certainly not be accounted for if we omitted the expectations aroused by the policy of the liberal Government; although it must be said that Fenianism had acted as a safety valve, and when it was got under, the same disease broke out again in its old form. Whatever might be the cause now, the Government could not refrain from acting; and in March, after the second reading of the land bill had been taken, a peace preservation act was introduced, which was pronounced satisfactory by the opposition, and received with far more genuine favour by both sides of the house than any previous measure of redress. This bill gave the Government power to regulate the possession of arms and gunpowder, and to control persons going about at night; it gave compensation to those on whom outrages had been committed, or in some cases to their relatives; it increased the power of obtaining evidence, and gave the magistrates power to deal summarily with the smaller cases, while the Lord-Lieutenant was authorised to punish offences of the press in Ireland by seizing the plant and all copies of an offending newspaper. The seditious journals were indeed to a great degree to blame for all the self-inflicted sorrows of Ireland, and a stringent law against



them was greatly needed for the public good ; and this coercion bill, if it had no other result, had an excellent effect in taming down the agitators who counselled rebellion and assassination from the safety of their office stools, because it sold their papers. Meanwhile, in February the land bill had been introduced, and fell indeed sadly short of that fixity of tenure which had been for some months the universal cry of the poorer classes in Ireland. What was meant by fixity of tenure was the possession of the land for ever by the tenant in actual occupation at a fixed rent. The landlord was thus to lose all his power over the tenant, who so long as he paid the rent, ever diminishing as the value of money grew less, could not be evicted from his holding. This and nothing else would satisfy the people or their clergy (who wished their own power alone to remain unimpaired) ; but this was what could never be gained from a parliament of landlords. Hence, when Mr Gladstone explained the Government scheme, the disappointment felt in Ireland was bitter, and caused a violent reaction in the minds of the lower classes, while a mountain of anxiety was lifted from the breasts of the landlords. The verdict of the English press, including the most conservative newspapers, was unanimous in its favour, as a moderate bill, while the national papers in Ireland denounced it as a gigantic piece of tinkering. The aim with which the bill was framed was not to introduce new laws or customs, but to give the force of law to those actually in existence ; and in doing this, to give as little shock as possible to the rights and interests of the different classes affected. The most important provisions of the bill were the legalisation of the Ulster tenant right ; the principle of allowing the tenant a certain number of years' rent, the compensation decreasing in the inverse ratio of the holding. Compensation for improvements made within twenty years, such as would add to the letting value of the farm, the onus of disproof resting with the landlord. The assistant barristers sitting in quarter sessions were to act as arbitrators, an appeal being allowed in certain cases to two judges in Dublin. There were also in the bill, as originally proposed, an admirable provision, allowing farmers, with or without the consent of the landlord, to give a plot of land to their labourers for house and garden, and an application of Mr Bright's plan of enabling the occupants to buy out their farms by loans of public money, the same facility being offered landlords of reclaiming waste lands : these portions of the bill however were abandoned. By giving their tenants leases of sufficient length to exhaust their own improvements, landlords were relieved from the compensation clauses, and, on the whole, they could not have expected to get so well, and with so little loss of their powers and prerogatives, out of Mr Gladstone's hands. The measure passed through the two houses without much difficulty, the debates being left very much to the Irish members, and before the summer was half over it was sent to Ireland to work its good mission, to be as a shield thrown over the weak, to guard them from an oppression which we believe was very rarely exercised, but generally dreaded. The iron rod with which they have been ruled for centuries, has deprived the Irish peasantry of moral courage, and given them a cringing manner to their superiors, which often conceals the wrath beneath. An Irish

agent in the habit of speaking to the farmers more like dogs than men, though just and upright in his dealings with them, has declared to us that the people liked it. They appeared to do so; they licked the rod. A farmer one day observed of this same agent that ten waggons could not carry all the curses on his head. The Land Bill, by making the tenantry secure against real oppression, will gradually remove the hereditary terror of it, and cure them of that hypocrisy which it was once so necessary to practise, and which should remind Englishmen, who are apt to criticise it harshly, of their own tyrannical dominion in the past centuries.

It might now be supposed that Ireland would have become more tranquil, and that the exaggerated expectations of the people being dispelled, and all that justice demanded conceded, there would have been a great decrease of agrarian outrages, but this unfortunately was not the case. The Ribbon Society was more active than ever. Its success in reforming the land laws induced it to turn its attention to other matters. A master could not discharge one of his labourers, or even severely scold a servant, without being in danger of a bullet. To make a scarcity of eggs in a district by buying them up for the English market might cost the egg-merchant his life. To the Ribbonman the passing of the Land Bill was only a mark of cowardice, which in no way satisfied his aspirations, while it emboldened him to go on terrifying and shooting with redoubled vigour. The Coercion Bill which had been pronounced so very satisfactory was utterly ineffectual. As the Spring of 1871 advanced, a terrible catalogue of crimes, not the acts of criminal individuals, but the product of a system, and carried out by an extensive association with which the whole midland population was in complicity, excited so much wrath in England that the Government was obliged to seek for some stronger remedy. The disestablishment of the Irish Church had been followed by an act which took away its grace; must the Government again counteract its own policy? Feeling that very soon the people of Ireland would discover that their real grievances were removed by the Land Bill, and that if there were only time for it to operate, the murderer's profession (for like the hangman's, it had become quite a profession in Ireland) would at last be completely gone; the ministry tried to withstand the cry for hard measures, without daring to oppose it openly. Perhaps combined with a wish to gain time, there was a desire on the part of ministers to spare their own popularity in Ireland, not for popularity's sake, nor for party objects, but the better to be able to carry out the pacification of the country, by preserving its confidence. For this reason they would have preferred to let a few assassinations more be committed, and go unpunished, rather than frustrate a great policy. But if anything was to be done, it was better that parliament should bear the blame, because there is an impersonality about parliament on which hatred cannot be concentrated as it can upon the individuals of a ministry. A parliamentary committee was therefore proposed to receive evidence in secret which could not be obtained openly, and to devise and suggest a remedy. Parliament however was clearly adverse to having the functions of Government thrust upon it; the opposition desiring to force the Government into making itself unpopular, to dis-



credit and stamp folly on its own policy by having to follow each measure of conciliation by a measure of unusual rigour, to pass a Coercion Bill on the disestablishment of the Church, and a suspension of *Habeas Corpus* on the tenure of Land Bill, accused them of abdication of their function while holding their places. The press scolded and lectured the ministry for not acting at once, and imploring guidance instead of leading. Notwithstanding the general disapproval of the country the committee was appointed in the end. It was not to propose legislation, but to discharge the function of a grand jury, and say if a *prima facie* case had been out for the action of government. Accordingly the secrets already known to officials were revealed to the Westmeath committee, as it was designated; and a report was furnished to parliament which stated the general result at which every one, without investigation, had arrived. With this very thin covering from the wrath of the Irish people, the government, after some delay (which Mr Gladstone by an unfortunate expression ascribed to his not having had time to attend to the report of the committee), proposed to give the Lord-Lieutenant power to suspend *Habeas Corpus* in certain districts, where Ribbonism abounded. The effect of this measure was most efficacious and salutary. The Ribbon leaders fled to England, where it was unfortunately decided they should be unmolested. For a while the organisation was sadly disarranged; and time was given, it was hoped, before the act should expire, for the Land Bill to do its work in establishing better relations between landlord and tenant.

CHARLES LUCAS, M.D.

BORN A.D. 1713.—DIED A.D. 1771.

THE memoirs of Charles Lucas link the memory of the period just passed with that on which we are now entering. It is as the initiator of a patriotic movement that he is of importance in Irish history. His first appearance upon the scene was in the rising of that healthy wind of public spirit, which was, before his death, for a while to regenerate the country. He is remarkable as having been the first Irishman who advocated short parliaments, and the Octennial Bill was chiefly the result of his persevering efforts. Lucas's ancestors were respectable farmers in the county Clare. He himself seems to have come to Dublin early in life and established himself as an apothecary, subsequently taking out the degree of doctor of medicine. He gained considerable reputation as a physician, being employed by many of the Irish nobility, and his practice was fed and extended by his politics. The election of the energetic doctor to the common council of Dublin, prepared the court of aldermen for a troublesome assailant. It was in 1743 that, in concert with Mr James Latouche—a name honourable in the records of Dublin—he raised an inquiry into the lavish expenditure of the corporation, which had encumbered the city estate to the extent of £30,000. It was while engaged on this inquiry that a new quarry started before them; they fancied that the appointment of aldermen, which was monopolised by the court of that order, belonged

properly to the whole corporate body—Mayors, Sheriffs, Common Councilmen, etc. This supposition was backed by the most eminent legal opinions, but on a suit being brought in the Court of King's Bench, on a motion of *quo warranto* against the last elected alderman, permission was refused for an information, and the proceedings were rendered abortive. The main confederates were left to sustain the weight of the victorious board's displeasure, and their names were in consequence struck out of the next triennial returns of the common council. Shortly after, the aldermen had the satisfaction of seeing their two chief assailants directing their attacks upon one another. A vacancy occurred in the representation of Dublin, for which Dr Lucas and Mr Latouche became competitors. Mr Latouche was a moderate and practical man compared with his former ally. He declared his hostility to the abuses of the corporation, but as to more general questions, he was in favour of the English connection, and denied the dependence of Ireland to be an evil, whilst he deprecated as rash and injurious any attempt to awaken jealousies between the two countries.

Whether Latouche's moderation forced Lucas into extremes, or his own violence suggested prudence to the other, we cannot determine; however this may have been, Lucas now went as far and as violently forward on national, as he had formerly upon civic grievances. He called upon the people in his addresses to vindicate their constitutional liberties, denounced the conduct of the administration, and assailed the authorities and parliament in language of such violence as laid him open to the charge of sedition. While displaying his zeal for the rights and liberties of the people, and by doing so acquiring considerable popularity, he overlooked the eyes and ears of a more formidable power. The competition between him and Mr Latouche was terminated by another vacancy occurring in the representation of Dublin by the death of Mr Alderman Pearson, whose son was started by the civic authorities. This led to a not very hearty coalition between the two candidates on the popular side. Lucas had attacked his colleague with so much bitterness, and so unfairly, that sincere cordiality was impossible between them, though they appeared together at public meetings. The board of aldermen in the meantime adopted the method of a personal canvass, and an accidental circumstance which occurred at this time gave them considerable confidence as to the result of the election. It was thought advisable, as the tolls and customs had been for a long time falling in value, owing to mismanagement, to commit them to the charge of individual self-interest. An alderman undertook to farm them for a term of years at a very advanced rate. Lucas immediately denounced the transaction as a job, and alleged that the assembly of the common council in which it had been carried, was a packed meeting of the slaves of the board. By this charge the board of aldermen was enabled to bring the common council into its own array of battle, and obtained a resolution that the charge was false, scandalous, and malicious. Lucas attempted to defend himself, but was refused a hearing, while in a second meeting of the council, not only was the censure confirmed, but the author of a pamphlet entitled "Lucas detected" received a vote of thanks. Lucas and his friends appealed to the corporations, of which fifteen out of twenty-five declared



against the aldermen; but the courageous doctor, notwithstanding this support, was soon to be driven out of the field by the censure of a more powerful body and the threat of condign punishment. A weekly newspaper named the *Censor*, filled with the most scandalous attacks upon his opponents, was believed to come principally from his pen, and quickened into decisive action the malice of his enemies. A new Lord-Lieutenant had come over in the person of Lord Harrington. It was supposed from his conversation, that he was inclined against the court of aldermen; and on his arriving in Dublin, the doctor hastened to the castle. He was received and listened to with politeness, although no decided opinion was expressed by the Lord-Lieutenant, who merely took a copy of papers forming the substance of the speeches and addresses upon which Lucas had been accused, and dismissed him with every mark of courtesy. Dr. Lucas took all this as an assured victory; his own bluntness and simplicity made him incapable of seeing through the diplomatic veil of attentive civility; but when in the fullest confidence he attended at the next levee, he was surprised and mortified by receiving an intimation to withdraw. The meaning of this was not to be mistaken; and a few days after, on the opening of parliament, the Lord-Lieutenant's speech contained an allusion too plain to be misunderstood. Two days after the subject was directly introduced; a complaint was made enumerating Lucas's misdemeanours, and it was ordered that he and his printer should next day attend to be examined before a committee of the house. He attended, offered to vindicate himself, and was of course told that he was there only to answer such questions as should be put. Among other evidence the books and papers which he had presented to the Lord-Lieutenant were produced; without these he could not have been condemned, and Lord Harrington had the questionable taste to hand over to the accusers the documents which had been entrusted to him for his private perusal. After the examination Dr. Lucas was ordered to withdraw, and four resolutions were passed affirmatory of his guilt, and calling for a prosecution, with an order that he should at once be committed a close prisoner to Newgate jail, for violating the privileges of the house. The only stand in his favour was made by Sir Thomas Prendergast, but it was plain that from such a combination as was arrayed against him, no effectual shelter could be found, and, convinced of this, Lucas escaped to England. Absence by degrees blunted the edge of hostility, and he was enabled after some years to avail himself of a reaction in his favour and return to Dublin. He was elected for the city, and in the new field opened for his practical talent and keen popular spirit he soon began to take a prominent part. He was one of those who brought in a bill to limit the duration of parliaments; and he subsequently endeavoured to secure the freedom and independence of parliament by ascertaining the qualification of members, and providing that by accepting office under Government they should vacate their seats. Lucas was very active in 1765 in opposing the dispensing power of the king in council, and published an address to his constituents, attacking the measure with his usual vehemence. As might be expected, the man of popular assemblies and the hero of corporations was not so effective in an assembly of lawyers and trained debaters. He was too combative, too wanting in self-command and teni-

per, to be a leader of men. In time, however, he acquired that certain weight which cannot be denied to sincerity and earnestness. In his old age he was an object of general respect, his appearance and venerable deportment contributing to produce this feeling. During the latter years of his life he was reduced to the lowest degree of infirmity by repeated attacks of the gout, so that he was always carried to the House of Commons, where he could scarcely stand for a moment. His appearance in the house is thus described "the gravity and uncommon neatness of his dress, the gray, venerable locks, blending with a pale but interesting countenance, in which an air of beauty was still visible, altogether excited attention, and I never knew a stranger come into the house without asking who he was." He was married three times—at his last marriage he was so crippled as to have to be carried to bed. He left children by his three wives. His death occurred in 1771, and he had a public funeral which was attended by the Lord Mayor and corporation and many members of the House of Commons. A statue of Lucas was placed by subscription in the hall of the Royal Exchange in Dublin.

Dr Lucas was a clear and forcible writer; and if it be true that the skilful imitator of Bolingbroke tried his 'prentice hand on the Dublin doctor, copying his style and pushing his opinions to extremes, it was no little glory to be thus made a subject even for the mimicry of Edmund Burke. For many years he conducted the *Freeman's Journal*, a paper founded shortly after the accession of George III., always patriotic and fair in its politics, but then the organ of liberal Protestantism as it is now of Roman Catholic liberalism. Lucas was a decided Protestant; his patriotism and his liberal sentiments only embraced his co-religionists; the Irish Protestants were to him the Irish Nation, though but half-a-million out of the two million and a half forming the population of Ireland. This observation applies to all the patriots of that day, until Grattan soared to a higher region of patriotism, and Roman Catholic emancipation became the watchword of the party of freedom. While the selfish exclusion of the Roman Catholics from their aspirations continued, there was a curse of sterility upon even the successes of the patriots. To secure, as they hoped it would, the independence of parliament, they fought for the Septennial and obtained the Octennial Bill, which was the great triumph of Lucas's political life; but its only effect was to increase the gains of the boroughmongers, by bringing their wares into the market oftener than before. The freedom of parliament, the declaration of right, the repeal of Poyning's law, the independence of Ireland, all won, and all lost; the act of union was the finishing stroke by which everything that belonged to the weak was given into the keeping of the strong, and Ireland became as an unwilling and unhappy wife, deprived of all rights of her own, by a selfish, inconsiderate, self-opinionated, and coarse, though not ill-natured husband, whom she none the less with all her heart detested.



## JAMES, EARL OF CHARLEMONT.

BORN A.D. 1728.—DIED A.D. 1799.

JAMES CAULFIELD, first Earl of Charlemont, came of a distinguished family; the founder had been created a baron for services both by land and sea, having taken part in important naval actions under the great admirals of Elizabeth's reign, and fought under Mountjoy in the Irish wars against the Earl of Tyrone. Another member of the family (the second viscount), having been implicated in the Revolution, suffered attainder from the parliament of James II., but was restored and promoted by William III.; and afterwards signalised himself by his valour in Spanish campaigns, under the Earl of Peterborough. The subject of our memoir, being considered too delicate for the rough life of a public school,—then rough indeed—was educated at home under private tutors, and was an excellent type of the sort of character formed by home training. His sensitive refinement, singleness of heart, religious principle, delicate sense and high standard of honour, extreme contempt and disgust for all that was impure and profligate, and his good address and conversational powers, were all directly traceable to his being brought up in the society of his parents, tutors, the guests of the family, and younger brothers and sisters. On the other hand, the rough training and hourly collisions of school-life give the nerve and confidence in which Lord Charlemont was somewhat deficient, and rub off that extreme sensitiveness and unwillingness to be exposed to the public judgment which kept him silent in parliament, even when the acknowledged leader of his party. At the age of eighteen he had mastered more than the ordinary course ordained for young men, but had so materially injured his eyesight, that foreign travel was recommended as a relaxation; and he accordingly set out upon wanderings that ultimately, whether at the outset it was so intended or not, extended over eight years. He had the advantage, during all this period of foreign travel and sojourn, of the companionship of his tutor, Mr. Murphy, a classical scholar of considerable reputation. In Holland he witnessed, and probably derived a youthful inspiration from, the movement which seated the Prince of Orange in power; and proceeding thence to Germany, he paid a visit to the English army, and was kindly received by its commander, the Duke of Cumberland, with whom he always afterwards continued on friendly terms. His next stopping-place was Turin, celebrated for its university, where his passion for study seems to have broken out afresh, and he continued there as a student for a year, a favourite of the Sardinian court, and enjoying the youthful friendship of the Prince Royal. In the eminent and varied society of Turin, his formed and pleasing manners, and the conversational power which he so early developed owing to his association from childhood with older minds, won him many warm friends,—not the least distinguished, and probably the most dangerous of whom, was

David Hume. Lord Charlemont observed, with gratified vanity, that the philosopher singled him out from among all the other young men, and evidently desired (such, at least, was his own belief,) to make him a disciple. Against this danger, however, his mind was fortunately proof; and if we may judge, from the very amusing and graphic sketch which he has left of Hume's appearance and address, his personal persuasions were less weighty than his writings. Mrs. Oliphant, in a recent work, in which she selects Hume as the typical sceptic of that period, has copied Lord Charlemont's description of him almost verbatim. His harsh dialect and awkward manner, his broad face, with wide mouth and vacant leaden eyes, and low clumpy form, dressed in a scarlet uniform which he wore, "like a grocer in the train bands," in the midst of that polished and perfect society, must have made a most curious and incongruous figure. Instead of becoming a disciple of the amiable but odd-looking infidel, Charlemont wonderingly speculated what could induce a man not only so free from malignity, but so benevolently disposed as Hume, to do such a deadly wrong to mankind as to endeavour to impair religious belief; and concluded that he was prompted by the overpowering vanity and craving for distinction so often found united with an uncouth exterior.

We cannot follow Lord Charlemont on his travels, which extended from Italy to Constantinople, and thence to Egypt and Greece. Of course he felt the ordinary, or perhaps more than the ordinary, pleasure of a classical scholar, in visiting the beautiful and haunted scenes of Greece and its islands; encountered the usual storms in those capricious waters, and met with the customary mishaps and adventures. At Messina he had an opportunity of seeing the awful desolation caused by the plague, which, just before his visit, had carried off five-sixths of the inhabitants. There his party were put to the curious test of jumping over a bar, three feet from the ground, to prove their freedom from infection; and only one very stout gentleman found a difficulty in satisfying the authorities; but even he succeeded, after many desperate efforts. On one occasion, in a tremendous Levanter, the captain of the vessel came down and told his passengers to prepare for the worst, as the ship must almost to a certainty founder. The momentary silence which followed was broken by an exclamation from Mr. F. Burton. "Well," exclaimed that gentleman, "and, I fear," writes Lord Charlemont, "with an oath, this is fine indeed! Here have I been pampering this great body of mine for more than twenty years, and all to be a prey to some cursed shark, and be damned to him." The "unexpected oddity" of this exclamation afforded a moment's mirth, on which fear itself was willing to seize as a brief respite. The danger continued through a wild night of storm, during which all depended on a single plank, which was in a bad condition, holding. "And yet," writes Charlemont, "we hoped—the principle of religion was active in our minds, and despair fled before it. Woe to the wretch who, in such a situation, is destitute of this comfort!" We quote this passage to show how unsuccessfully Mr. Hume had endeavoured to make him a convert to his infidel views. Having put in at Malta, and been released from quarantine in 23 days, Lord Charlemont was received with great hospitality and distinction by the military monks. The Grand Master,



prohibited by custom from eating with his guests, joined the company when the cloth had been removed. Masked balls, which had long been forbidden on account of the riots they occasioned, were renewed in honour of him and his friends, and afforded them a good opportunity of judging of the profligacy of the island. In Malta dissipation and luxury, and consequently vice of every description, were carried to the most extreme lengths. "The town of Malta is one vast brothel," was the pithy and comprehensive description of Charlemont. The knights of Malta being only religious, in so far as they were devoted to a life of celibacy, but in every other respect ordinary military men, compensated themselves for the abstention from matrimonial pleasures by the lowest depths and latitudes of profligacy. Debauched themselves, they debauched the island. "Every woman almost is a knight's mistress, and every mistress intrigues with other men. Hither flock, as to an established mart for beauty, the female votaries of Venus, from every distant region—Armenians, Jewesses, Greeks, Italians." We recognise in the tone of genuine contempt in which he speaks of this profligate society, one of the great advantages of home training, a natural loathing of vice. Having returned to Turin to be present by invitation at the marriage of the prince, he thence proceeded to Rome, where he resided for two years, and was one of the earliest examples amongst the English of house-keeping there; his establishment being efficiently superintended by his friend Mr. Murphy. Whilst at Rome he was a liberal patron of art, and Sir William Chambers, who was then in straitened circumstances, was indebted to him for assistance. He seems to have extended his acquaintance among cardinals, ambassadors, and noblemen of every rank and nation; and the reigning pope, Benedict XIV., treated him with affectionate, almost parental kindness. After leaving Italy, he made a short journey into Spain, and then, on his homeward route, travelled through France. He has left an interesting account of a meeting which he (accompanied by a friend) had with the philosopher Montesquieu near Bourdeaux. On this occasion his physical powers were put to the same test as at Messina. Having been taken out to see some improvements in the grounds, they came to a wood surrounded by a paling-fence, and Montesquieu, who is described as "a gay, sprightly, polite Frenchman," but, withal, seventy years of age, not having the key of a bar three feet high which crossed their path, proposed, to save time, that they should jump over it, and himself gallantly led the way over to the amazement and delight of his guests, who were relieved from the restraint they had first felt in the company of the distinguished philosopher at finding him likely to become their playfellow. Montesquieu related to them how, in England, the Duke of Montagu, having invited him to his country seat, before they had time to get into any sort of intimacy, but probably with a similar design of removing his embarrassment, (and this may have suggested the recollection to the Frenchman,) adopted the much more extreme measure of sousing him over head and ears in a tub of cold water. Whether this had the desired effect of removing the first awkwardness has not been left on record, but Montesquieu, though he thought it odd no doubt, took the expedient good humouredly, as a specimen of insular manners. After a sojourn of three days at the ex-president's villa, his

secretary accompanied them to Bourdeaux; and at the end of their journey they found out to their great uneasiness that this gentleman before whom they had exchanged remarks in English, which they did not intend him to understand, was in reality a countryman of their own. However, in their subsequent meetings with Montesquieu at Bourdeaux they found him as friendly as ever, and were as much surprised by his command of that light ethereal sort of conversation which is so acceptable to Frenchwomen, as they had previously been at his senile agility. This was but a short time before his death.

In June, 1754, Lord Charlemont returned to Ireland in his twenty-sixth year, with a knowledge of the great world, and a freedom from local bias, which probably imparted a loftier tone to his public career, and made him a unit of a higher political order than has ever been indigenous to Ireland. His long sojourn in foreign countries, and mixture with distinguished men of all nations, enabled him to look from an eminence, on which mere intellectual power would not have placed him,—and see the affairs of his own country without prejudice, and in their just relative proportions. His rank and wealth set him above the temptations of the struggle for place and pension which he saw going on below, but into which his contempt for all that was base and unworthy would have made it impossible for him to enter. Absence, while it elevated and cleared his political vision, did not lessen, as it does in so many, attachment to his country. In him patriotism was free from fanaticism, was always guided by judgment, and a strong sense of responsibility towards the land in which he enjoyed his rank and property entered into its composition. He was, as he styled himself in an epitaph found among his papers after death, “a sincere, zealous, and active friend to his country.” This truly describes the dignified and protecting affection with which he regarded Ireland; he was a self-sacrificing and sincere friend, rather than a blindly devoted lover. He thus in his latter days bore true testimony of himself: “I need not say how ardently I have ever loved my country. In consequence of that love I have courted her, I have even married her, and taken her for life.” There is traceable in this language a conscientiousness of the social sacrifice he had made in immuring himself in Ireland, where he found scarcely anyone with whom he cared to be on terms of friendship, giving up his taste for travel, and denying himself the pleasure of mixing in the congenial society of the English metropolis; it also inadvertently expresses the protecting relationship in which he felt himself to stand to his country. What makes the leading position held by Lord Charlemont in the popular party for nearly half a century so very striking is this,—the absence of those brilliant qualities, or even the power of great political generalship, presumably necessary for the attainment of such a position. He held it merely on the strength of his moral worth, and the confidence inspired by a high and chivalrous character:—because he was the honestest and most trustworthy man of all who might aspire to be a popular leader then to be found in Ireland. He possessed, it is true, good sense and sagacity, considerable tact and address and knowledge of men and manners; but it was his really noble moral character which made him the head of his party. He was the first of Irish patriots—almost the originator in Ireland of



that virtue which ultimately degenerated into a national vice. The country as he found it was not only in the most impoverished and languishing condition, but by the necessary reaction of such a state of things on human feeling, its interests were generally affected. As Swift wrote to Bolingbroke with a truth that in our times may only pass for wit, "the fact is, we never had leisure to think of that country while we were in power;" the sentence carries a reflection on the patriotism of Swift too severely true for the play of fancy; and it may be generally applied to the patriotism of the gloomy interval between the Revolution and the date at which we have arrived. The Irish patriot was only such for the ordinary purposes of opposition—the struggle for place and power, and the conflict of personal interests. But if ever patriotism existed without the alloy of corrupt and selfish motives, it was in the breast of the Earl of Charlemont. From the first year of his return, when, owing to the favourable report that preceded him, he received from the university of Dublin the honorary degree of LL.D., and was appointed governor of Armagh, with a seat in the Irish Privy Council, he was generally looked upon as a coming man. His entrance to public life was in itself extraordinary, and marks the position he at once took up. It was as the negotiator of a reconciliation between Primate Stone and Mr. Boyle, the Speaker of the House of Commons, who had engaged in a trial of strength as to the disposal of a surplus of revenue, amounting to £200,000, disputed between the Crown and Commons. The Speaker was a self-seeking patriot of the type we have described; he possessed considerable talent, and an influence in parliamentary elections more extensive than that of any other individual; and his opposition was likely seriously to retard and embarrass the Irish government. His opponent was one of those Irish ecclesiastics on whom we look back with a mixture of wonder and repulsion, and whose existence in the 18th century is so anomalous as almost to excite incredulity. A Protestant Cardinal Wolsey, who flourished a hundred years ago under the British crown, is almost incredible, and yet such was the position of Primate Stone. The Primate was, in fact, the temporal ruler of Ireland, and cherished a very unspiritual love of earthly power. Like Archbishop Boulter, who expressed the utmost dread lest the Protestants and Catholics should become more united, Primate Stone was the incarnation of Protestant ascendancy, and looked upon his office as being to protect English interests at the expense of Irish. The conflict between these two men was extremely inconvenient to the English government, who did not wish the "power of the purse" to be brought into dispute. A resolution of the Commons asserted the right of parliament over the expenditure of the surplus in question, but the Primate, who was at the head of affairs, paid no heed to this resolution, and the money was expended by government. The English ministry perceived the difficulties to which they might be exposed by such treatment of the Irish parliament by the archiepiscopal Lord Justice—their policy having been to preserve the right of imposing and expending the taxes without exciting opposition by an offensive exercise of the power. They feared the opposition of the Speaker, and they disliked the support of the Primate; and to set both aside, their first step was to send over

as lord-lieutenant the Marquis of Hartington (son to the Duke of Devonshire), whom personal qualifications, and the large Irish property of his family, made highly popular in Ireland. The new lord-lieutenant intrusted to the young Earl of Charlemont, who was related to the Speaker, and influential with the primate, owing to his social and public position in Armagh, the task of bringing the two parties together, and effecting a personal reconciliation. In this task he was very successful; but he little knew when performing the amiable part of peace-maker, and moving them to mutual forgiveness, that the dignified archbishop and the patriotic commoner were laughing at him in their sleeves, and had really concerted a private treaty between themselves and the government, in which the conditions were set forth of this Christian act; it was agreed that the Primate was to have his share of power, "though not at that time, yet at no distant period," and that Mr. Boyle should be created Earl of Shannon, with £3,000 a-year for thirty-one years. Charlemont's natural satisfaction at the success of the delicate task with which he had apparently been intrusted, was changed into disgust on learning its real spring, and the baseness of the transaction in which he had been made to appear as the principal negotiator. "This," said he, "was the first instance that occurred to me among many thousands to which I was afterwards witness, that the mask of patriotism is often assumed to disguise self-interest and ambition; and that the paths of violent opposition are too frequently trod as the nearest and surest to office and emolument."

The dispute, however, which was thus settled, had the most wholesome effect on the public mind; and one remarkable and significant result was, that a borough sold in 1754 for three times as much as in 1750. A free discussion was once more heard within the walls of parliament, and a spirit was aroused which never again subsided until it manifested itself in the most remarkable passages of Irish history. It was not, it is well observed by Mr. Hardy, Lord Charlemont's biographer, a mere motion of the populace, like those tumultuary excitements caused by the Drapier's Letters; but it was an open, full, and spirited discussion, which burst in upon the torpor of the Irish parliament like a breeze upon a stagnant sea, which awakes the billows of its power, and disturbs the reptiles that float upon its torpid level. The discussion that was aroused by this transaction, though it apparently came to nothing, and the resolution of parliament was allowed to be overridden, propagated an impulse into the future; and we shall presently come to the first indication of the latent power which was thus brought into being.

Lord Hartington, who had duly appreciated the independent and noble character of Lord Charlemont—and from whom the latter had received unsolicited a cornetcy of dragoons for his brother—the only favour with emolument attached to it he ever received from the Castle, having succeeded to the dukedom of Devonshire by the death of his father, left the government of Ireland in 1756, and was succeeded by the Duke of Bedford. It was about this time that Charlemont, in whom the spirit of opposition began to stir more strongly, formed the design of trying by a fictitious suit the validity of the act passed by the English parliament in the reign of George I., depriving peers of



Ireland of their judicial functions. A severe illness, followed by a long interval of delicate health, obliged him to relinquish his design; and when he had acquired more experience, he was glad that he had been prevented from carrying it out. Failure would only have confirmed what he regarded as a wrong; and it is extremely doubtful if the Irish House of Lords would not, so little independence then existed in it, have confirmed its own deprivation. "Neither Grattan nor Flood were yet in parliament, nor if they were, would parliament have encouraged them. My splendid but boyish scheme fell therefore to the ground," was his own comment in later times. Lord Charlemont's illness was of a nervous character; during three or four years he took little active part in public affairs, and his health was not fully restored until the year 1760. In the first year of the Duke of Bedford's lord-lieutenancy, however, an incident occurred in which his influence was at work, and helped to give the House of Commons its first success over the Government. A resolution was passed that "the pensions and salaries placed on the civil establishment in Ireland, since the 23d of March, 1755, amounted to the annual sum of £28,103; that several of such pensions were granted for long and unusual terms, and several to persons not resident in the kingdom; that granting so much of public revenue in pensions was an improvident disposition of the revenue, an injury to the crown, and detrimental to the kingdom." It was ordered that the House should wait upon the Lord-lieutenant, and request him to submit this resolution to the king. The answer of the Duke of Bedford to the Irish parliament was, that he would take time to consider the propriety of forwarding such a message. This extravagant piece of insolence was met with unwonted spirit; and, we have little doubt, from the notice he has left of the affair, that the course taken by the House was prompted by Lord Charlemont. Two days after the duke's demur to the forwarding the resolution, it was resolved that all orders should be adjourned until the House should receive an answer from the Lord-lieutenant. The Government, startled by this proof of a spirit of resistance, hitherto latent, withdrew with undignified haste from the foolish position it had assumed, and for which Primate Stone and Mr. Secretary Rigby had probably been principally to blame. Lord Charlemont exonerated the duke himself; who gradually, as his eyes became accustomed to the fog of Irish politics, and he began to act independently, won upon the public esteem. In opposition to much preconceived prejudice and evil counsel, he treated the Catholics with unexpected favour and indulgence. Indeed, an enlightened English nobleman could scarcely fail to discern, whatever were his party views, that the policy maintained in the government of Ireland was not in unison with the principles of any existing party or creed; there was no class of men in England or Ireland whose views were identical with those of the Irish Privy Council. He could not fail to discover a fact which is too generally overlooked, that the stern policy of the Irish Government was that of a small knot of powerful individuals. The Protestants of Ireland were not answerable for this policy; on the contrary, they were full of the most kindly sympathies towards their Roman Catholic brethren, and felt the most universal abhorrence of the active oppression under which they suffered, and the iniquitous penal laws. But of course it must be understood that a

powerful faction, however small in number, must be surrounded by a cloud of partisans, composed of those who are ignorant, those who are paid, and those whose private interests are concerned. Perhaps it was the perception of a state of things for which he could see no other remedy, that suggested to the Duke of Bedford the idea of a union between England and Ireland, which would deliver the latter from her native oppressors, and subject her to the same system of free government enjoyed by the former. There certainly was, during his administration, a very prevalent rumour that such a measure was being contemplated, though it does not very plainly appear from what quarter the rumour proceeded. Mr. Hardy conjectures that it arose from some convivial suggestion of Mr. Rigby, who indulged much in social intercourse, and, in the contracted society of Dublin, such a hint would have quickly spread. It is not improbable that it was a feeler—a straw thrown upon the wind of rumour; if so, the indication it evoked was not doubtful, as great murmurs of discontent agitated the town, and the affair was presently forgotten.

Lord Charlemont having, in 1760, owing to the skill of his physician, Lucas, quite got over his delicacy, was witness to a very remarkable display of popular spirit on the occasion of the landing of a small fragment of a French invading army at Carrickfergus. We have already (Introduction, p. 4) spoken of this landing,—the sudden attack upon the castle, the repulse, mainly by the inhabitants, the surrender owing to want of ammunition, the abandonment of the place by Thurot, and the re-embarkation and capture of his force. The French commander, who had expected to be welcomed by the people as their deliverer, and to be able to raise and arm a body of irregulars to supplement his handful of troops, was amazed to see the people of Antrim assembling in great force to repel the invasion. The patriotic spirit of resistance which it provoked was the only thing that made the landing memorable, and may probably be regarded as the first symptom, and perhaps the occasion that suggested the movement of the Volunteers. Lord Charlemont, who was governor of Antrim, was only in time to receive the surrender of those who, being wounded, remained in the fort. Among the prisoners was M. Flobert, the officer whom Thurot seems to have superseded in the command. Charlemont was surprised, as he proceeded, to find the northern counties in arms, the hardy northern yeomanry, roused by the sound of invasion, pouring in thousands into the towns headed by the gentry, in a manner that recalled the annals of a more military age; and he has thus recounted what he saw on his arrival in Belfast:—"The appearance of the peasantry, who had thronged to its defence,—many of whom were my own tenants,—was singular and formidable. They were drawn up in regular bodies, each with its own chosen officers, and formed a martial array; some few with old firelocks, but the greater number armed with what is called in Scotland the Lochaber axe—a scythe fixed longitudinally to the end of a long pole—a desperate weapon, and which they could have made a desperate use of. Thousands were assembled in a small circuit; but these thousands were so thoroughly impressed with the necessity of regularity, that the town was perfectly undisturbed by tumult, by riot, or even by drunkenness." The spirit thus manifested



was destined, in few years, from the same place, to produce the most important national results.

In 1760 the Duke of Bedford returned to England, and on the 12th of October George II. died. Lord Halifax was the new Lord-lieutenant, and his secretary William Gerard Hamilton, celebrated for his single speech, of which more hereafter. The marriage of the king was the occasion of an attempt to put a slight upon the Irish peeresses, which roused all Lord Charlemont's patriotism and gallantry. It having been the intention of a number who were in London at the time to appear in the nuptial procession in their robes, they were apprised by the Duchess of Bedford, greatly to their amazement and chagrin, that they were not entitled, as members of the Irish peerage, to take any part in the state ceremonial. It would be difficult to imagine a finer opportunity for a chivalrous young peer to show his attachment to his country, his order, and above all, to the fair sex. With the promptness in action for which he was always distinguished, he immediately went the round of the Irish peers then in town, to obtain the advantage of their concert and influence in a matter which lay so near to their honour, and in which the feelings of their own wives and daughters were so deeply concerned. In this mission, however, he appears to have been to a great degree unsuccessful; whether owing to the abject spirit of subserviency which too generally prevailed, or to the fact that, as husbands and fathers, they were less enthusiastic than he in a matter involving considerable outlay, and were rather glad to be relieved from the loyal and patriotic duty of sending their families to figure in a court pageant. If feelings so base animated the breasts of others, Charlemont, at all events, was resolved, that neither precedent nor etiquette should deprive the peeresses of Ireland of the place which was due to their rank and charms; and having found an ally in Lord Middleton, they both waited on Lord Halifax, the new Irish Lord-lieutenant, at Bushy Park, by whom the matter was immediately brought before the king himself. George III. entered at once, with the natural grace and kindness of his disposition, into the aggrieved feelings of his fair subjects, and promised that their claims should be submitted to the Privy Council, which was to sit upon the following day. Lord Charlemont was informed that he must be provided with precedents to lay before the council, and fortunately learned that Lord Egmont, who had written a work on the rights of the Irish Peerage, could probably supply him with the information he required. After an anxious night, he called upon this learned peer, and was introduced into his chamber before he had risen. Happily, Lord Egmont was full and satisfactory on the subject of his inquiries, and undertook to furnish the required precedents in writing, which he did upon the spot. These were forwarded to Lord Halifax, by whom they were submitted to the council; and, notwithstanding the angry opposition which they excited, and which may undoubtedly help to show the contempt which at that time lay upon Ireland, even though the matter in itself was one about which the Irish nation could not have felt much concern, the king interfered on behalf of the peeresses, and ordered that they should walk in the ceremonial according to their ranks. It seems that after procuring this concession, Lord Charlemont had some trouble in making the nobility take advantage of the places

thus assigned them; and he took care, to crown his labours, that their names should appear in the "Court Journal." This gallant vindication of the rights of the peeresses may be classed with his youthful intention of bringing to a decision the judicial powers of the Irish House of Lords; and both together show a jealousy for the dignity and power of the order to which he belonged, hardly, when seriously considered, to be confounded with patriotism. His possession of that virtue requires not the slender proof those transactions could afford; and by confounding with patriotism his very strong patrician pride, we should miss a distinct trait of character. His moral position as a patriot was the more remarkable because he was also a noble of the nobles.

During the administration of Lord Halifax, those secret societies of the peasantry for the redress of wrongs which the law of the land, instead of punishing, permitted and empowered, became very prevalent over the whole of Ireland, but were especially formidable in the northern province where the young Lord Charlemont now wielded a sort of chieftain's power. There alone the spirit of the people was unbroken by the terrible oppression that elsewhere had crushed the heart of Ireland—that oppression which alone the English people know how to exercise,—which their descendants have not paralleled in the southern states of the American Union, nor Russia in Poland, nor any nation elsewhere,—which made it natural to the Irish peasantry to cringe like dogs about the feet of their masters—which made it natural for them to go down upon their knees to the magistrate or agent, or even "the parson" himself, when demanding a favour, and from which the province of Ulster was alone exempt. There the people were accustomed to be treated as human beings, rights and customs prevailed, and even the Roman Catholics, to a great degree, shared in the advantages of their Protestant neighbours. But the northerners themselves were not without their domestic grievances, and the mediæval system of keeping the roads in repair by requiring of each householder six days' labour in the year of man and horse, began to be violently resisted. What chiefly exasperated the peasantry was, that the roads were not generally made with a view to the popular convenience, but to the convenience of the landlords, and hence were called *job roads*.\* One parish openly refused to make any more: the contagion spread, and soon extended over the whole province—the Hearts of Oak, as the resisters of compulsory labour were called, gradually extending their opposition to the payment of tithes and rent. The disturbance had almost assumed the dimensions of an insurrection, when Lord Charlemont, who, more than any man in the north, possessed the unbounded confidence of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, hastened to his post as Lord-lieutenant of Armagh, and by promising a redress of wrongs, and by the exercise of his great influence, and not without some bloodshed, restored the peace of the province. Nor did he fail, in the ensuing session of parliament, to exert all his influence that his promise should be carried out;

\* After the famine the Board of Works, in order to prevent a return to this system, provided that the roads, on the construction of which the poor received employment, should be such as not to suit the convenience of any person,—hence they generally were made to lead half a mile into a morass, or to the foot of an inaccessible hill. See Introduction, p. 76.



and the result was, that the old act was repealed, and a new provision made by a more equal distribution of burthens for the making and repairing of roads. For his important services in quelling these disturbances, Lord Charlemont, in 1763, was raised in the peerage to the dignity of an Earl.

While the Hearts of Oak were disturbing the north, Munster was infested by a secret society called into being by the\* enclosure of the commons, and known as the Whiteboys. When a system of outrage had once begun, sectarian zeal, which is never far behind where mobs are congregated for any cause, was easily turned on the Protestant clergy; they and the landlords were regarded in the same category as parasites living on the people, and the landlords made this serve a double purpose—both as a diversion of popular hatred from themselves, and as obscuring the real cause of the discontent, which was their own tyranny. By giving a religious colour to all such disturbances, they confirmed even the most liberal statesmen of that day in the opinion that it would not be safe to relax the penal laws by which, in truth, the Roman Catholics were rather galled than confined. It has ever been so, that popular insubordination in Ireland has been in its essence and root unconnected with religious feeling, while in its outward developments assuming enough of that character to seem to justify the prejudices that connected the past and present,—the time when to be a Roman Catholic was to be a Jacobite and a conspirator, and the day when Jacobites and conspirators were extinct, but the Roman Catholics still continued to be regarded with a senseless suspicion. This superstitious terror of them survives amongst us to the present day; and indeed, except in the highest and most cultivated circles, can scarcely be said to have abated one jot. The mixture of fright and fury which Roman Catholicism excites in the ordinary Englishman is one of the most remarkable phenomena of history, and can only be compared to that superstitious dread implanted in childhood, and from which few men can ever pretend to be wholly emancipated. We insist so much upon the religious complexion which was given to the Whiteboy disturbances of Charlemont's time, and the prejudice which has thus from time to time been reanimated, because it will account for the position held both by him and by his most liberal contemporaries on the Catholic emancipation question. The utmost extent of their liberality went no further than a wish to ease the upper ranks of that church from the pressure of a law at once insulting, inconvenient, and ineffective. A circumstance which occurred at this time will serve to illustrate the general sentiment; and is not out of place here, as Lord Charlemont's views were strongly expressed upon the subject. The only field in which Roman Catholics could attain military distinction was in foreign service; and the injurious effects of this foreign training had been felt in the rebellion of Sir Phelim O'Neale. The Portuguese government having applied to England for aid, it was proposed to raise six Irish regiments to be transferred to the Portuguese service. This was proposed by the secretary in that celebrated oration which won for him the soubriquet of "Single speech Hamilton," and has thus carried down to posterity

\* Introduction, p. 6.

the erroneous impression that he never spoke but once. But the opposition, founded on the old precedent of Sir Phelim O'Neale's rebellion, was too strong for the government, and the motion failed. Lord Charlemont, who concurred in this opposition, was yet too amiable and generous not to deplore the position of so many of his fellow-countrymen. We will just quote a sentence of his as embodying the liberal creed of the day:—"The situation of the Catholic gentry of Ireland was at this time truly deplorable. The hostile statutes directed against them, however their necessity may have ceased, were still unrepealed, and respecting devise and inheritance they laboured under the greatest hardships. In time, however, it might be hoped that these difficulties might be palliated, or perhaps removed; but they were subject to one inconvenience which seemed to be so interwoven with the existence of a Protestant interest and government, that sound policy, and, indeed, necessity, must for ever prevent its being remedied." The possible removal of some restrictions from "the Catholic gentry of Ireland" was we see the utmost bound to which Lord Charlemont's wishes advanced; while even then he thought it would be "for ever" necessary to exclude from all share in self-government, lest "the Protestant interest" (a phrase that sounds strange and scarcely intelligible to modern ears) should suffer by their admission. The admission of the Roman Catholic populace to equal rights with people of other denominations was still as far from his thoughts as the admission of the sea through his ocean barriers is from a Hollander's. But times altered, and public opinion slowly modified, and made Lord Charlemont less confident as he grew older; and we shall find that in the end the conquest of "an old prejudice" was achieved in his essentially conservative, but, to the extent of his light, just mind, by one of Ireland's most eminent sons.

We are now entering on the phase of Irish history in which the most prominent figure was that of the young peer who had already taken up the position of leader of the popular party in Ireland. Other leaders were to arise in a few years—men like Grattan and Flood—who were to surpass, but not to take his place: but during the transition period his was the leading spirit. We must briefly consider the condition of the country and the growth of the forces, of which Lord Charlemont was the exponent. From the time of Swift there had elapsed a long torpid interval in which the nobility and gentry held the people in a subjection like that of the brute kingdom, and they in turn were kept in bond by a lavish expenditure upon themselves and their clients of the public revenue. Besides this, they depended on Government to support them in their despotic authority over the native Roman Catholics, who, in consequence of their submission to extortion and tyranny, were preferred to Protestant tenants. The latter being more civilized and independent, felt the oppression of these local tyrants more keenly, even though it weighed upon them less heavily. Protestant ascendancy was only another name for a tyranny of Families which the Roman Catholics suffered from, and Protestants resented, most. The greater submissiveness of the former was owing not only to a broken spirit, but to the drawn sword of the penal laws, which was ready to be let fall upon them at the slightest appearance of resistance; and, except as an



instrument of terrorism in the hands of the Families, the penal laws were inoperative.

During this leaden interval all had lain in silence under one spiritless level of subjection. The parliament was merely nominal; it simply served to give an air of legality to enactments not less absolute than those of the first Cæsars, in which the forms of the republic were still preserved. The meetings of the houses were but formal; prayers were read; leave was given for the judges to be covered; and a motion of adjournment ended the solemn farce. The return of a bill from the English privy council was only some shades less potential than the *grandis epistola* from Capua. By Poyning's law (1495) passed at Drogheda in the reign of Henry VII., Sir Edward Poyning being lord deputy, all but money bills were to be referred to the English privy council, having besides to pass the ordeal of the privy council of Ireland, and in the end they were probably altered in such a manner as to frustrate their original intent. Besides this law, the English Commons, eager to enforce on Ireland certain commercial restraints and disabilities, passed a bill in the 6th year of George II., asserting the right of the king and the English parliament to legislate for Ireland independently and over the head of her own legislature. The Irish house of peers had at the same time been deprived of their appellate jurisdiction. It will be understood how these encroachments could have been submitted to by the Irish parliament when its own constitution is taken into account. The whole representation of the country was in the hands of the Families, and they preferred the influence of government and the added importance which they gained by patronage and power to the prosperity of the country upon which they clung like insatiable leeches. Hence, having all the power of parliament, they allowed it to remain passive, while the trade of Ireland was being ruined by excluding it from English and colonial ports, and laying prohibitory duties upon Irish exports.

In vain also from time to time efforts were made to remedy the main legal defects in the constitution of Ireland. They were always defeated by the vigilance of the Irish administration and the influence of the Families. The enormous pension list, as we have already seen, was subject of complaint,—the independence of the judges was another primary object of vain contest,—and in 1765, this latter subject was introduced with increased spirit, but with the old result. It was about this time, however, that two great managers of party were removed,—Primate Stone and Lord Shannon, who both died in December 1764; and the stability Lord Charlemont's influence and character gave to the increasing independent party began to tell, and make each new defeat a nearer approach to victory. So evident was it becoming to the administration that the opposition would soon be too strong for them, and that the influence of the Families was becoming less and less reliable as a basis of government, that the bold resolution was adopted of putting it on a completely new foundation—governing by parliament itself instead of by its masters, and purchasing the support of members in their own persons instead of in the persons of their patrons. It may be hoped too, that a sense of the disgrace of the connection with the undertakers and dislike of the unpopularity which it reflected had some influence on

their minds; and the men of ability and spirit who had stood up of late to expose the system supported and countenanced by the high position of Charlemont, made its continuance almost impossible. Daylight is all that is required to put an end to what is most disgraceful; and the dawn of a morning, cloudy enough it is true, but still a morning, was actually breaking over Ireland. The night-haunting crew could not with their deeds of darkness much longer affront the growing daylight. The English government had no desire for the independence of parliament—for what we call constitutional government in Ireland; but far more anxious to unfetter themselves from the arms of that prostitute influence by which they were at the same time upheld, controlled, impoverished, and debased, they made their election, and secured for Ireland the first great step of political revival. Till this time the Irish Commons held their seats for the life of the king—which amounted to an entire separation of interest between the representation and the people. While the constituency was nominal, this was of less consequence, and tended rather to make the nominee to a seat to some extent independent of his patron, although such independence, owing to the immense secret power of the patrons, was at best of the most limited description. But when the constituencies began to become conscious of their own existence, and to think the election of representatives in some degree a business of theirs, it was obvious that by making elections take place at intervals of a few years, instead of once in a generation, the influence of the people in parliament was increased, and the influence of the Families was proportionally diminished. Of all measures that could well be conceived, the limitation of parliaments would strike most directly and closely at the root of corrupt power. In 1765, under the administration of Lord Hertford, there was much activity displayed by county meetings throughout the kingdom, in which numerous resolutions were carried in favour of such a measure. In Dublin, a meeting of the citizens published a declaration, and instructed the city members to unite in this paramount effort. The measure for abridging the duration of parliaments having been first ineffectually and insincerely entertained in 1761, was now in 1767, under the administration of Lord Townshend, taken up with more earnestness. The Commons had been sorely pressed with the reproaches of the people, and galled by numerous writings and discussions, calculated to render them unpopular, they once more took up the question, and transmitted the heads of a bill for the limitation of parliaments to seven years. Between this step, what was calculated to allay the agitation and the passing of the bill which the agitation had been designed to promote, was an interval which it was never intended to pass. A great jealousy had been shown in the preceding year of the right of altering their bills assumed by the English Privy Council, and they had uniformly rejected any bill returned with alterations, even though most anxious for its success. It is certainly therefore a suspicious circumstance, that the septennial was changed in England to an octennial bill, and seems to argue that at this stage the English cabinet was not more sincere in wishing it to pass than the Irish Commons. Strange to say, however, contrary to the general expectation and to the consternation of many, the bill did pass; but it was still confidently hoped that the Irish Privy Council



would not allow this farce, which was becoming painful, to proceed any further. The bill was detained for two sessions, and it was hoped by those who had brought it to such a dangerous stage that they had heard the last of it; but the facts had transpired, and the clamour was long, loud, and irresistible. In fact they had allowed it to go too far; the government evidently then, if not earlier, resolved on the bold course we have already indicated of throwing the undertakers overboard, and dealing directly with the members themselves, and at last allowed the bill to issue into law. The following account was given by Lord Charlemont, of the effect which the announcement of this produced on the "friends of the measure." He happened to dine with a large party at the house of one of the great parliamentary leaders, where conviviality and good wine were abundant. In the midst of the festivity the letters and papers which had just been brought by the packet from England were handed to the host. Scarcely had he read one or two when it appeared that he was extremely agitated. The company was alarmed. "What's the matter? nothing we hope has happened that"—"Happened!" exclaimed their kind host, swearing most piteously. "Happened! the Septennial bill is returned." A burst of joy greeted the announcement from Charlemont and the few sincere wellwishers of the bill who happened to be present. The majority of the company, confused, and indeed almost astounded, began, after the first involuntary dejection of their features, to recollect that they had openly, session after session, voted for this bill, with many an internal curse it is true; but still they had always been its loudest advocates. They endeavoured therefore to adjust their looks to the joyous occasion; but they soon received another shock which brought the consequences more immediately home. "The bill is not only returned," continued their chieftain, "but the parliament is dissolved." "Dissolved, dissolved! why dissolved?" "My good friends, I can't tell you why or wherefore; but dissolved it is, or will be directly." Their feelings became too intense to be concealed; a sullen taciturnity fell upon the board, and Lord Charlemont taking advantage of the blank moment to withdraw, said that a more ridiculous rueful set of personages he never beheld.

We have dwelt at some length on this cardinal point in the history of the time, because in our introduction we were obliged to pass lightly over the transitional period. True, it would be a mistake to suppose that this change in the constitution of parliament, by which it was made more really representative of that small element in the nation which it pretended to represent, was sufficient to account for the triumphs that it was soon destined to achieve—equally false as to suppose that the broad river is indebted for its existence to the spring that forms its source, or the brawling stream from which it expands; whereas in reality made what it is, by the formation of the country and the extent of the basin it drains; so it was the whole confluence of events that led to the successes of 1782; and the Octennial bill only made a beginning; but as such was important. It was hailed by the people with enthusiastic rejoicings, and the Lord-lieutenant's carriage was drawn through the streets by the citizens, as he returned from giving it the royal assent. The parliament was dissolved; but its successor was not to meet for sixteen months, in order that Lord Towns-

hend might have time to corrupt the elements of the new assembly. The great boroughmongers were secured in the ordinary way by the exercise of patronage and a lavish expenditure of revenue; and a large number of members of the first octennial parliament were bought up at the market price. The success of Lord Townshend's preparations was very considerable, though not entire, when the parliament was next assembled in 1769. Though the government had secured a majority for ordinary purposes, they soon found they had inclosed in their drag-net some intractable and dangerous fishes. In fact they could not depend on their mercenary forces; who, having already sold themselves, of course in their own estimation too cheaply, were always wanting to be bought over again; and could never be depended on not to relapse into patriotism and virtue with utter fickleness,—as ready to break as to make their infamous contracts with government. If all the muddy depth of political life were to be revealed to those, who, like Charlemont, only see its surface, on which so much that is high and glorious is reflected, they would probably shrink from it with loathing, and leave the task of governing and making laws to the most corrupt and unworthy. But for the time fortunately it was unseen, and the stench was kept down; indeed, it is only when the tide has withdrawn that the impurity of a past day is ever completely revealed. Little was it known to the Irish parliament that a report of Mr. Secretary Orde to Mr. Pitt, made a few years later at the desire of the minister, would yet be at the disposal of whoever should choose to refer to it, stating the price of each man's support,—for how much he was willing to sell his honour. The only consolation for the Irish student of his country's history is, that the British parliament was at this time and later almost equally vile; and that the imperial parliament of our own day, though too rich to be bought, is not too honourable; for surely there is little to choose between buying seats and selling votes.

The event which proved to the government that they had not corrupted enough, and that they had not yet in their own influence with parliament, obtained an equivalent for the influence of the Families, was the unceremonious rejection of a money bill. It had not originated in the Commons, and it was thrown out by a combination of the Castle retainers with the popular party. For nearly eighty years no similar event had occurred; the exclusive power over the purse in the representatives of the people had never been insisted on; First, because parliament had been so little of a representative body (at the best representing only the Protestants), that it had no strength or independence. Secondly, until Charlemont's time there was no leader of sufficient influence to conduct it in a successful opposition. But the house could now stand a storm from the Castle, being newly founded on the people; what had given it reality, had given it strength; and the leadership of the Earl of Charlemont (for as yet he stood alone at the head of the party) resulted in the first decided victory. The greatest indignation was excited in England at this assertion of independence. A popular journal commented upon it in terms that manifest the prevailing contempt for Ireland, and the wrathful surprise excited by this act of rebellion. "The refusal of the late bill, because it was not brought in contrary to the practice of ages, in violation of the constitution, and



to the certain ruin of the dependence of Ireland upon Great Britain, is a behaviour more suiting an army of White Boys, than the grave representatives of a nation. This is the most daring insult yet offered to government." In consequence of the house of Commons being guilty of this act of defiance, as it was considered, Lord Townshend, in declaring parliament prorogued, pronounced a severe rebuke, in the same tone, on the representatives of the nation. The lower house having forbidden the clerk to enter this speech on the journals, the Lord-lieutenant entered his protest in the house of Lords. Against such an irregular and unconstitutional proceeding five lords protested—viz., Charlemont, Lowth, Mountmorris, Powerscourt, and Longford. Protest and counter-protest were of as little practical importance as such proceedings are in general; but Lord Townshend censuring the parliament of the nation would have seemed less of an anachronism in the reign of Charles the First.

As to the right of the house of Commons to reject a bill on such grounds, the theory of constitutional government implies such a right; and that Poyning's law was against them on the plain construction of its whole sense, and as it was interpreted by subsequent statutes of Philip and Mary, may be admitted consistently with maintaining it. For under the form of "heads of bills," the Commons had been allowed to originate what measures they thought fit, and under this sanction, they had uniformly been accorded the privilege of originating money bills. The exclusive and jealously guarded right of the English Commons to this privilege rests upon precisely the same basis of prescription; in their case, it is true, this prescription is opposed to no enactment, and could not therefore be represented as an usurpation; but the enactment which long prescription had set aside in the Irish parliament, was so plainly unconstitutional and anomalous, that as a dead letter it had no force against a living practice. To recall the old law amounted to an express declaration of despotic power; and the language at this time of the British parliament directly applying to America, but understood to glance at Ireland, increased the popular ferment,—nor was it lessened by a hint let fall by a member of the administration, that the money bill had been laid on as sort of fine for the renewal of parliament.

And now another interval of fourteen months was taken up by government in the silent process of corruption. This process could not be so safely or successfully carried on during the session of parliament, while the party which Charlemont led was collected together under his watchful eye, the members mutually protected by each other, and by the heat of the contest, from falling into the enemies' hands. Meanwhile Lord Charlemont, who in 1768 had married Miss Hickman, daughter of Mr. Robert Hickman, of the county of Clare, and built a residence near Dublin, called Marino, for the benefit of the mild sea air, the cold climate of the north where his estates lay not agreeing with his health, watched the progress of events during this period of armistice, and saw that the influence of the Families which the government had joined with the opposition to weaken, was leaning more towards the popular party, although too much habituated to be on the side of the administration, to take the other side at once or perhaps ever. But

still a very slight revolution at the centre showed a very great revolution at the circumference. Parliament was at length called together in February 1771, and the fruit of Lord Townshend's labours was at once apparent. This assembly of gentlemen, who had been receiving during the prorogation so many marks of his kindness and consideration, took the first opportunity—the address to the king—to thank him “for continuing his excellency, Lord Townshend, in the government of this kingdom.” It may be imagined what consternation and amazement this address produced in the Earl of Charlemont, and all those who were not carried away by their grateful feelings, and had not the same profound causes for thankfulness. Mr. Ponsonby, the Speaker, determined to resign rather than present it; and although Charlemont made great efforts to induce him to keep the chair, and spent a night in reasoning, to which the Speaker assented, he was surprised next day by his carrying out his first intention. He observed in resigning, that this lord had, “on the last day of the session, accused them of a great crime,” and the thanks appeared to him “to convey a censure of the proceedings, and a relinquishment of the privileges of the Commons.” Mr. Edmond Sexton Pery was in consequence chosen Speaker in the room of one worthy to preside over a more dignified assembly. In the parliamentary campaign that ensued, Lord Charlemont, though silent in the upper house, was the great strength and support of his diminished party. The success of Lord Townshend's administration, however, continued to show itself more distinctly. He strengthened himself in both houses—in the upper by the creation of a batch of peers he counterbalanced the growing opposition that Charlemont had marked as an encouraging sign, and in the lower by introducing several young men of talent he added to the debating power of the government. The spirited resolutions and the determined resistance of the opposition were completely borne down, and every proposal for the good of the country thrown overboard with a high hand. Charlemont's forces seemed to press the grievances of Ireland in vain; but the struggle had this good result, that it attracted attention in the English parliament, where Edmund Burke, who was first brought into notice by the Earl, already towered over almost every head. This noise of battle was so inconvenient that Lord Townshend was recalled in 1772. The cabinet perceived, that notwithstanding its temporary humiliation, the opposition was gaining in strength and popular support, and that a sympathy was growing up between it and the English opposition. Lord Townshend, who was a great wit, and played his part in a lively and audacious style, was not considered prudent enough for his post. A member of the house of commons declared that his excellency said more good things in one night than the whole house in a year.

His successor, Lord Harcourt, was amiable but reserved and studious, too refined for Irish society, and not sufficiently determined and active. But Lord Townshend had secured him a tame parliament; and his secretary De Blaquiere, who was said to be the first who ever bestowed a thought on Irish interests, kept good wine and a French cook. Whilst Ireland was thus governed troubles arose in the north. A nobleman's agent, by a most oppressive arrangement, endeavoured to increase his employer's income, and the consequence was that the Pro-



testant tenantry threw up their farms. They sought redress by a rising, and took the name of "Hearts of Steel." Lord Charlemont, to whom it was most painful to act against the people, keenly feeling their wrongs, was bound by his position to assist in putting down the disturbance, but his influence and conciliation did more to accomplish this result than the force which he was compelled to employ. It is remarkable that he who was afterwards the great leader of the armed nation, was the one for nearly half a century to quell these irregular outbreaks. The revolt of the Hearts of Steel led to the emigration of many thousands of Protestants to America, where they added to the growing disaffection. There the resistance that had first been excited by the stamp act in 1765, was growing on to that which the tax on tea in 1775 should at last cause to burst into civil war. In Ireland a keen sympathy was felt with the spirit which had been kindled in the States; similar wrongs and sufferings made this feeling intense. Dreadful poverty prevailed everywhere, and the mistake was made of estimating the prosperity of the country by the wealth of the mercantile community. The millions of the people barely existed, and the produce of the land was poured nearly whole into foreign markets; there was a large debt, and much of the rents were spent in England. The people were so overtaxed that the imposition of new duties could only, in the same amount that they produced, lower the old ones; and the public expenditure exceeded the taxation. It is no wonder that the Irish thought they could manage their own affairs better than this, and felt that the question that was coming to an issue in the colonies, was the question which they too must bring to an issue soon. One incident may help to show the extent of this public sentiment. When Lord Howard of Effingham, on learning that his regiment was destined for the American service, resigned his command, the City of Dublin voted him its thanks for having, like a true Englishman, refused to draw his sword against the lives and liberties of his fellow-subjects in America; and soon after the Guild of Merchants presented him with an address of a still more decided character. This guild also addressed the peers of the opposition, who, "in support of the constitution, and in opposition to a weak and wicked administration, had protested against the American restraining bills." In 1776, the embargo on the exportation of Irish provisions, except to Great Britain and British dominions not in rebellion, was proclaimed by the Lord-lieutenant and Council; this, considering the already intolerable restrictions which had reduced the country to beggary, was more than could be borne, and the Irish parliament began to show itself so intractable, that it was considered advisable to send over Lord Buckingham. This nobleman appointed as secretary his agent Mr. Heron, a man totally unequal to such a position at such a time. Great efforts were made by the new lord-lieutenant to keep parliament in hand; and we can measure the growth of Charlemont's influence in the house of lords by the necessity which the government found itself under of creating a great number of new peerages—18 of which were gazetted in one day. Meanwhile a real resolve was manifested in England to do something for the relief of Irish trade. On the motion of Lord Nugent, a committee was appointed to consider the subject in the English house of commons, and though any material relief was made im-

possible by the opposition of the mercantile interests, there was some enlargement granted in favour of the linen trade. The same liberality was shown upon a question on which happily there was complete unanimity. A general sentiment had gradually grown up in favour of the relief of the Roman Catholic gentry. To this extent, we have already stated, that Lord Charlemont, and indeed men of all parties, were willing to go. The laws against them were so atrocious that they had been permitted to fall into desuetude. The judges, to the utmost extent in their power, interrupted their operations, and the Protestant gentry connived at their evasion. But still they gave a feeling to the most respectable that they were in the power of the basest. "This species of subserviency," wrote Mr. Burke, "that makes the very servant who stands behind your chair, the arbiter of your life and fortune, has such a tendency to degrade and debase mankind, and to deprive them of that assured and liberal state of mind, which alone can make us what we ought to be, that I vow to God I would sooner bring myself to put a man to immediate death for opinions I disliked, and so get rid of the man and his opinions at once, than to fret him with a feverish being, tainted with the jail distemper of a contagious servitude." The Roman Catholic nobility and gentry in advocating their claims showed the greatest prudence and moderation; suspicion was lulled; king, lords, commons, bishops, and clergy, all expressed their concurrence; the relief bill was carried in the Irish house by Mr. Luke Gardiner in 1778, and in the English by Sir George Saville. To removing restrictions on their tenure of property—in fact all restrictions but that which excluded them from parliament, Lord Charlemont was a warmly consenting party; but as he was never a champion of the Roman Catholics, we have only noticed this measure to show how far he was able to go, and to keep events in their places.

And now the crisis was rapidly approaching; the state of Ireland made it apparent that the game of expedients was at an end. From end to end poverty, distress, and insolvency, lay like a cloud upon the land. The revenue drawn from Ireland doubled the value of her exports. While heated discussions on Irish affairs were introduced into the British parliament without result, the Irish parliament was assuming a firmer and less factious tone. In 1775, Lord Charlemont had brought in Mr. Grattan for his own borough:—but incidents from without gave the ultimate direction to events. The Irish channel was now infested with American privateers which seized on trading vessels within sight of shore. Irish traders were, for the first time, compelled to sail under convoy along the very coast, and a great part of the English trade was carried on in foreign bottoms. France, by a treaty of commerce, recognised American Independence, and made preparations for war. Irish disaffection was of course calculated upon, but was not forthcoming. In her darkest hour a gleam of hope broke upon the country; brave and prudent men, not mad visionary fanatics, were her trusted leaders; the people of the north, when danger threatened before, had discovered their own strength, and felt that now, headed by Charlemont and Grattan, the safety of the kingdom, and the redress of the national grievances, was put into their power by providence. The addresses of America had excited temporary heat, but the better and more in-



fluent portion of the Irish people, while reciprocating the maxims and sentiments of freedom, and roused by the stirring sounds that reached them from across the Atlantic, had hope of better days, and confidence in wiser guides, and did not overlook the fact, that a great party in England warmly sympathised with their wrongs, and would do everything to help them in procuring redress, while rebellion would be sure to rivet their chains faster, and lose them the ground they had won with difficulty. Besides, it must be remembered, that the larger body of the people, the Roman Catholics, had not yet begun to take a part in political movements, and seemed scarcely to have awakened to political consciousness. The people who represented the nation were the Protestants, English by descent and feeling, and they bore a much larger proportion to the whole population than they do at the present day; for they had not yet, in the south and west, been blended into the Roman Catholic masses by the process of intermarriage, and by first losing their own religion, through neglect, and then in the next generation adhering to the prevailing faith. They were then strong in the land, and though much irritated against England, by no means the irreconcilables that the Roman Catholics have proved themselves since. But it is scarcely possible to say what difference it made at this crisis, having a man like Charlemont as their chief,—a leader who would lead—one of sufficient boldness to put himself at the head of a great and perhaps dangerous movement, that might bring an imprudent man to the block, and sufficient coolness and judgment to control it within just and patriotic limits. It was a moment of great and universal alarm both in England and Ireland; a French invasion was believed to be imminent; the French and Spanish fleets had appeared in the channel; the harbour of Dublin was fortified for the first time. Then it was that, when Belfast, the great commercial city of the north, applied to the government for protection, all that could be offered it was half a troop of dismounted cavalry and half a corps of invalids. This acknowledgment of helplessness, that the government could afford but 60 troopers and a few disabled veterans to defend the chief town of the north, which on a former occasion had been the point threatened with invasion, was tantamount to a commission to Belfast to defend itself, and it was instantly accepted as such. The city immediately formed a volunteer corps, the officers of which were chosen by election, and which was armed, clothed and maintained at the expense of the citizens. All the northern towns followed the example of Belfast. The town of Armagh raised the corps immediately under the command of the Earl of Charlemont; but, though not at this time formally elected commander-in-chief, he was virtually at the head of the whole movement in Ulster, as Lord Clanricarde was of a similar movement, of course on a miniature scale, in Connaught. That rude levy which, nineteen years previously, he had found garrisoning Belfast, principally armed with the Lochaber axe, commanded by self-chosen officers, and partly composed of his own tenantry, must often have haunted his memory in the interval; and now an emergency of the same kind had again called the people to arms; that wild array of peasantry, bristling with scythes, had grown into a great well-appointed army, of which he himself was the natural chief.

The rise and growth of the Volunteers was startlingly spontaneous and rapid; the government was scared, the enemy disconcerted, and in Ireland there was a deep and pervading sense that without one act of disloyalty, but with the sanction of the most honourable occasion, Ireland for the first time held her own fortune in her hands. It was natural, indeed, that the government, with a bad conscience, and not knowing the temperate spirit that would govern the results, should be dismayed to see an Irish army in possession of a country which had been held in the most abject bondage for some hundreds of years. Their feelings were much what those of jailors would be to find their prisoners in possession of the jail, or keepers at finding that the lunatics had made themselves masters of Bedlam. They could not do anything but wait, in the most serious apprehension, to see what would follow. Not only had they no means of suppressing the movement, but, having neither men nor money, they were compelled to choose between a French invasion and an armed people. To some extent they were relieved by learning, as they shortly did, the highly civilized character and loyal motives of the northern volunteers, and the rank, pretensions and property of the gentlemen by whom they were officered; but although this was a security for the peace and tranquillity of the country, it only made them tremble the more for their own corrupt and oppressive system of government, and the many abuses which they found so profitable, and indeed necessary. The only expedient they could think of to bring the volunteer army under their control, was to induce the officers to accept regular commissions, in order, it was alleged, to secure their safety in case of being taken prisoners. This pretence, however, did not deceive the officers; and it is an indication that they understood the strength of their position from the first, that commissions were at once rejected.

England now beheld on both sides of the Atlantic great citizen armies—in America as rebels, in Ireland as defenders of the country, but claiming as the price of doing so the redress of wrongs more intolerable than those which had set America in rebellion. All the nation that had any political existence was united upon two objects—free trade and a free parliament. It was in giving expression and force to those two great wishes that the volunteers won the moral victory associated with their name. With all our admiration for Lord Charlemont, with all the praise which he justly deserves for preventing them from breaking into actual revolutionary excess, and for the courage and unconventionality which he, a great nobleman, displayed, in venturing to take the leadership, we cannot help feeling that, in the hands of a more determined man, they might have been prevented from launching into the absurdities which followed, and that if their action could have been limited to maintaining the freedom they established, they might have become a great institution of the country and guard of liberty.

We must now very briefly sketch the political results of the movement, which will be more properly developed in our memoir of Mr. Grattan, who was already become the recognised leader of the popular party in parliament. The interest of the volunteers centres round the Earl of Charlemont; but in the affairs which they so powerfully influenced, everything is bound up with Grattan. The intent of our work being to



make each man tell the portion of history with which his life was most connected,—unravel, so to speak, his own thread,—we shall reserve, as we said, a full account of the parliamentary transactions of the following years for the memoir of the chief actor in them. Indeed, although Lord Charlemont continued to be the most eminent personage in his party, one who was respectfully consulted at every step, and whose advice was seldom disregarded, his prime minister, Mr. Grattan, member for the borough of Charlemont, a man whom, as well he might, he trusted beyond all men, had relieved him of the responsibility of the initiative, and placed him somewhat in the position of a constitutional monarch. We have before described him as the patron and friend of his country, rather than a devoted partizan like Mr. Grattan; and this implies that his strong patrician consciousness, his long residence abroad, and continued intercourse, until 1773, when he gave up his house in London, with the best English society, converted him to some extent into an outsider, and put him out of perfect sympathy with his countrymen. And yet a somewhat rash patriotism, which his connexion with the volunteers illustrated, blended strangely and formed a curious combination with the dignified and aristocratic tone of the peer. Such a character was necessarily wanting in vigour and thoroughness; the home-bred boy comes out in the man; and it was impossible that in the same ranks with Mr. Grattan he could continue to be the real leader, although his influence and name were indispensable to the party. During the transition period, he was, as we have intimated, for want of any sterling man in the House of Commons itself, the one who chiefly controlled the policy of the opposition; but from the point we have now reached, he rather endorsed than originated it; and in the management of the volunteers, to which he almost wholly devoted himself, he had more than enough to employ all his energies, and was in a still greater degree withdrawn from the parliamentary counsels of the opposition. The volunteer army, at its commencement, in the spring of 1779, amounted to 10,000 men; but before the end of the summer it exceeded 40,000, and Lord Charlemont still persevered in the most successful efforts to augment its numbers, improve its discipline, and accustom it to act in the field. The spirit of the country rose with the volunteer power, and Lord North's propositions for the relief of Irish trade having been defeated by the English manufacturers, whose selfishness made them disregard every consideration of fair play, meetings were held in Dublin and the other principal towns, in which it was resolved to act on Swift's suggestion, and cease to import English goods. But on the meeting of parliament, in October, 1779, the effect of the volunteer movement was brought fully home to the government. The ministerial majority had for the moment dissolved. Under the shelter of the orderly thousands of volunteers that made an imposing display in Dublin, the opposition assumed a new boldness, and the way of the wind's blowing brought all who usually sailed in mid-channel over to the popular side. An amendment to the address in favour of free trade, which the government was forced to accept, was carried unanimously. When Parliament went to the Castle to present it, Lord Charlemont had lined the streets with volunteers, nominally commanded by the Duke of Leinster. From the grey façade of Trinity College, up the

long vista of College Green and Dame Street, in the midst of which stands the equestrian statue of William III., the centre of many a riot, many a fierce encounter, in later years, of town and gown, and of Orangeman and Nationalist, the thousands of the volunteers were seen drawn up in deep ranks, as far as the eye could reach. It was a grand moment of union: a moment when the love of country mounted high, and made all Irishmen brothers. There was no scornful question then, whether the address of the Irish parliament was fit to be transmitted to the king; its reception was most respectful, and the reply was of a kind to leave no doubt that it would be attended to by the cabinet. Four years later, the volunteers were making a different kind of display; and, instead of enforcing the wishes of the nation lawfully expressed by parliament, were endeavouring to intimidate parliament itself, and to make themselves the masters, instead of the servants, of the national representatives. We fear these pragmatistical and self-opinionated, but brave and patriotic northerners, from the very beginning, wanted a stronger hand over them than that of the amiable and honourable Charlemont. If that equestrian figure of the Prince of Orange could have leaped from its pedestal, there were the elements and the opportunity of a great pacific revolution, and they would have found in the man of 1688 a suitable leader. But so long as the only duty was to support the patriotic party in parliament, and stimulate the backward, Lord Charlemont's leadership of the volunteers was entirely successful. The display of force had the best effect on parliament, on the government, and on the country. The influence of armed thousands was no doubt unconstitutional; but all was unconstitutional in Ireland, and Charlemont's 40,000 bayonets only acted as a wholesome corrective to the wholesale bribery of the Castle. So much for the influence on parliament; and the coercion of government was even still more easily to be justified. Government is generally understood to be for the benefit of the governed; but in Ireland it was not so,—it was for the benefit of English trade, and for the depression of the trade of the country. It was justifiable that extra-constitutional force should be applied to make the physician cease to strangle his patient; to insist that, if England went to the bottom of the sea for it, Ireland should have justice and fair play, and should be governed strictly in her own interests. This is the only condition of amicable union between such uncongenial peoples whom nature has been so contrary as to join together, that they should each abstain from meddling with the internal affairs of the other, and be governed by their own prejudices. However demonstrable it may be that two wholly independent parliaments could not work in the same empire (see Introduction, p. 37), it must be remembered all the independence yet claimed for Ireland was that she should manage her own internal affairs. The proportion in which she should contribute to the expenses of a war, for instance, might easily have been settled by a convention, while the raising of it should have been the concern of her own legislature. But whether the national independence which the volunteers achieved for Ireland was desirable or permanently possible, they certainly abolished the system of malignant government; and this part of the work remained, for it could no more be recalled into existence than an extinct monster. Without throw-



ing off the English connexion, they reconquered Ireland; and not even the stern trampling down of the rebellion of 1798 could restore her to the condition of a conquered country.

The Irish House of Commons having passed and presented their address, amid the peals of national enthusiasm, entered on a course of proceedings dictated by the same impulse, and countenanced by the same array of national strength. They commenced by passing a unanimous vote of thanks to the volunteers, and showed their resolution to see out what they had begun by only voting the supplies for six months, and passing several important resolutions in reference to exports. These measures were attended with complete success. On the 13th of December, Lord North introduced three propositions embodying all the demands as to freedom of trade, and bills founded on these resolutions were soon passed, and received the royal assent. These concessions were received in the best spirit, and the Irish Commons gave substantial proofs of their satisfaction by granting supplies for a year and a-half, increasing the revenue, and clearing off an arrear. Their gratitude, however, was soon clouded, by the Mutiny Act being made perpetual by the English Privy Council; but in the conciliatory spirit of the moment this was allowed to pass,—a negligence for which they were severely censured. This incident is notable as being the first occasion on which the volunteers took upon themselves to sit in judgment on parliament. They had got so much credit by their early conduct, and parliament itself had made so much of their influence, that they were naturally anxious for opportunities of interfering. They continued to increase in spirit and in strength, but, at the same time, acquired too much of the character of a political organisation, in which they were unfortunately humoured by their leaders, who did not foresee the extraordinary lengths to which they would be borne on by presumption and folly. In 1781 the Earl of Charlemont was formally elected commander-in-chief, and found himself at the head of more than 100,000 men, creditably disciplined and appointed. The silent influence of a hundred thousand bayonets following the leader of the opposition in the Peers, would, if time had been allowed, have done all that was accomplished by dictation. We question if both Charlemont and Grattan were not in too much haste. The latter felt it hard, with a hundred thousand men under his friend's command, that he should be in a minority in the House, and perhaps pressed on the Earl to use his weapon, and terrify the government into yielding. The volunteers were themselves impatient of accomplishing nothing more; and Lord Charlemont seems at length to have consented to a bold course. In 1782 they assumed an attitude so imposing and formidable that all obstacles of a political nature gave way before the menace of their power. The party which was backed by their influence snatched all the fruits of victory at once; but in bringing in physical force to dictate to government and neutralize a parliamentary majority, they made physical force their master. The course to which this ultimately reduced them, was to join with their opponents to depose it from this position, and discharge it from their service altogether. The proceedings of 1782 were certainly very fine and spirited, if we put all this out of account. We must refer the reader, for the resolutions passed by a

sort of volunteer parliament sitting at Dungannon, and representing 143 corps, to our Historical Introduction (p. 11). With respect to all the resolutions, except the last, it is highly probable that they were suggested by Lord Charlemont, as in the following year the volunteers applied for instructions, in a manner that leaves little doubt that he had given them at least the outline for their first session of irresponsible legislation. The last resolution, declaring in favour of complete religious equality, was a stroke of Grattan's, by which he won the earnest support and gratitude of three millions of Roman Catholics, who had hitherto looked languidly on at a struggle in which their paramount wrongs were disregarded by both parties alike. And he who put those truly Christian words on the lips of the volunteers, for thirty-eight years defended them, threw them into a thousand eloquent forms, and at last died, bequeathing the cause to Plunket. This fact belongs to the memoirs of both men,—to Grattan's, because he was the author of the resolution; to Charlemont's, because it was proposed to the meeting of delegates without his sanction or knowledge, and caused him displeasure. He was not, as we have said, during his active life, in favour of Catholic emancipation; and this division of opinion may account for the fact that the abstract declaration seems to have sufficed for that time,—that it was not acted upon, as the other resolutions or demands were,—and that in the next session of the volunteer parliament, securing the full equality of their Roman Catholic fellow subjects was not among the subjects about which they consulted their commander-in-chief, and they passed on to quite a new topic, namely, parliamentary reform.

The proceedings of the volunteers and the language of their addresses, which breathed decidedly of a revolutionary spirit, caused the greatest alarm in England. It was obvious that one false move and Ireland would be lost. Concession of all that could be justly demanded was an absolute necessity; but yet an appearance of abject terror was equally to be avoided; and when, on Lord Carlisle's resignation of the lord-lieutenancy, the outgoing secretary for Ireland, Mr. Eden, stood up in the House and proposed, as the resource of desperation, a repeal of the 6th George II., Mr. Fox opposed the motion and administered some sharp correction. It was well understood, however, that Fox was prepared to comply; and on this arose another difference of opinion between Lord Charlemont and Mr. Grattan,—the former being inclined to give the minister time and allow him to yield with dignity, the latter being resolved to press him to the utmost. Mr. Grattan had his way; and here we see another illustration of the political mastery which he had established—necessarily, perhaps, from his being in the House of Commons, while Charlemont was in the House of Lords; but we can also understand why the older leader would be delicate in asserting authority over one who sat for his own borough. The opposition did therefore press on, and Mr. Fox felt the responsibility was too great to be trifled with; and so full acquiescence in the demands of Ireland was extorted from the ministry, and unanimously agreed to by all classes in England, under the pressure of necessity. The result belongs to the memoirs of the parliamentary leaders Grattan and Flood; suffice it here to say that by the repeal of the English acts that put it in subjection,



the Irish parliament was at once placed in a position of unqualified independence, and all was triumph and congratulation. The volunteers of Ulster and Connaught published loyal addresses; the universal feeling of enthusiasm, as usual, found eloquent expression; indeed we cannot help thinking, that in the popular documents of that day in Ireland, there was a purity, combined with a force of language, the art of which has been somewhat lost in that country. But the spirit of mutual congratulation died out, and the volunteers set about looking for more work. Heated by strong zeal, and with an exalted opinion of their own wisdom, they began to conceive that they stood in a sort of preceptorial relation to the parliament in Stephen's Green. They had to make laws for parliament to register, and very greatly they were exercised to find out what they should set before parliament in the next session. In the spring of 1783 they began to hold meetings, in which strong resolutions were passed in favour of reform; and in July a committee of delegates met in Belfast, and sent letters to Lord Charlemont, as well as to the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Pitt, and other members of the British administration. In that addressed to Lord Charlemont, the following passage announced the extent of their views:—"We have yet another favour to request, viz., that your lordship would inform us whether shortening the duration of parliaments, exclusion of pensions, limiting the number of placemen, and a tax on absentees, or any of them, be, in your lordship's opinion, subjects in which the volunteers of Ireland ought to interfere; and we earnestly request that your lordship may favour us with a sketch of such resolutions as your lordship would think proper to be proposed at Dungannon." The foregoing amusing passage, which overlooks the existence of any other body of law-makers except themselves, and in which presumption rises to a height almost sublime, must have been received by the volunteer commander-in-chief with perplexity and uneasiness. If a sort of Pride's purge was to be administered to the Irish parliament and government, everything was ready to hand; all that was required was boldness and determination in the leader—a freedom from all scruples and from all regard for the paths of precedent. A man who comes to rob a garden must not be afraid to tread on the flower-beds. Lord Charlemont had already used his army to force from the government freedom of trade and independence of parliament, and had done this in spite of a parliamentary majority. But he could not rise altogether above his regard for the privileges of parliament—and having just made it free of the English legislature and Privy Council, he was not willing to hand over its power into the custody of the committee of delegates; and in truth he was probably beginning to see that meddling with legislation was too tempting a pursuit for the class of persons with whom he had to do, who acquired from it, in their own eyes, a supernatural degree of importance. He was beginning to see that they would go on from step to step acquiring a larger view as they advanced, and a stronger appetite for change, and having brought them so far as he would, he should himself be dragged whither he would not. That in fact he must become a revolutionary leader, willing to plunge all things back into chaos on the chance of their settling down into their primeval goodness, or now, where he was, having set an independent

parliament in train to work all needful reforms, make a stand against the external force—the creative power, as it were, that had been called in—and insist on its leaving society to the operation of the general laws which it had so happily established. Having made a machine to go, it was childish to keep moving the wheels. So Charlemont thought, and so his parliamentary friends thought. The volunteers had passed beyond Mr. Grattan, and had gone on with Mr. Flood. They evinced, indeed, a decided preference for the more extreme counsels of the latter. All this worked with Charlemont, who returned to the letter of the committee a manly and moderate answer. He expressed a general concurrence with their views of measures, but reminded them that the questions to which they alluded were already in competent hands, and advised them to confine their addresses simply to the general desire for parliamentary reform. But the expression of a general desire was not all the degree of action which accorded with the notion entertained by the volunteers of their own functions; and undoubtedly the time had come to take a more decided course, and to put an end to their political meddling, instead of advising them to confine it to this or that object. Only two wise courses were open to Charlemont; both were bold; one was to be a dictator at the head of his army; the other was resolutely to use his authority to confine the volunteers to their drill; to insist on their gatherings being limited to field-days and reviews; but he was lacking in decision, and steered a middle course. On the 8th of September, 1783, 500 delegates representing 248 volunteer corps of Ulster, assembled in Dungannon. Thirteen resolutions were passed, the nature of which may be conjectured; we need only say that it was resolved to hold a general convention of delegates, five to be elected by each county, in the Royal Exchange, Dublin, on the following 10th of November, to digest and publish a plan of reform, and that the delegates were recommended in the meantime to collect information, while members of parliament were advised to withhold their consent from supplies being voted for more than six months, until this scheme should be developed for them by the “grand national convention.” The plan was to be “produced as the solemn act of the volunteer army of Ireland.”

On the 10th of November the convention met, and elected Lord Charlemont president. He has himself explained the motives that prompted him to the acceptance of that office. “The same reason which had induced me to accept the nomination from Armagh, and to persuade many moderate friends of mine, much against their own wishes, to suffer themselves to be delegated, namely, that there should be in the assembly a strength of prudent men, sufficient, by withstanding or preventing violence, to secure moderate measures, induced me now to accept the troublesome and dangerous office of president, which was unanimously voted to me. Another reason also concurred to prevent my refusal. The Bishop of Derry,” (the Earl of Bristol, a man of a character violent and eccentric, and of strong democratic opinions, that in a bishop passed for madness,) “had I knew done all in his power to be elected to that office, and I feared that if I should refuse, the choice might fall on him, which would indeed have been fatal to the public repose.” The Corn Exchange not being large enough to contain the convention, it was agreed to adjourn to the Rotunda; and a great semi-military display



was made through the streets in passing from one building to the other. Lord Charlemont led the way, attended by a squadron of horse, while the delegates, marching two and two, followed in long procession. The convention immediately resolved itself into a committee on the subject of reform, and Mr. Brownlow, a man of discretion and that weight which is given by large possessions, was appointed chairman; but although supported by the soberer and more sensible part of the assembly, the president and chairman were unable to prevent several resolutions from being carried of which they strongly disapproved. When the various schemes of reform were unfolded with which every presumptuous would-be legislator had come provided, we can easily imagine what a mass of crudity, ignorance, and folly, was collected together for digestion and discussion. Indeed we should fancy that a sensitive and cultivated gentleman like Lord Charlemont must have found the position most excruciating, and was probably heartily ashamed of the mock parliament over which he found himself presiding by an unhappy destiny. At length, after great labour, the convention gained an insight into its views on reform, and Mr. Flood, who was induced, by motives we cannot here discuss, to make himself its servant, brought in a bill on the 29th of November, 1783, to carry them into effect. The delegates omitted nothing that on their part could add weight to the orator. They crowded the galleries and passages in their uniforms, and listened in stern impatience to the discussion that ensued. The house, resentful and impatient, refused even to entertain a measure thus originated and enforced. "We sit here," said the attorney general, "not to register the edicts of another assembly, or to receive propositions at the point of the bayonet." Both sides concurred in refusing to admit Mr. Flood's proposition, and a resolution was passed strongly condemnatory of such interference. Poor Lord Charlemont meanwhile was presiding over the convention; and after two hours, receiving no intelligence, and having probably strong reason to suspect what was taking place in parliament, he prevailed on the delegates to adjourn until Monday. On Monday the convention met in a state of extreme resentment and mortification; they had been placed in a ridiculous position—and men thus placed are often led to give a very serious turn to affairs. Charlemont was full of apprehension of what might ensue; but when an orator stood up to harangue the assembled delegates upon the insult put upon them by the Commons, he was prepared with a suggestion which showed how much, even still, he could reckon upon their imperturbable vanity. Just as one might humour a party of madmen whose delusion consisted in fancying themselves a parliament, he reminded them of the custom, that nothing said in one house was noticed in the other, and hoped that they would act upon this established parliamentary rule. By thus humouring them, and by exerting all his influence and discretion, he with difficulty prevented their taking some desperate resolution; and his task was rendered all the more difficult because the volunteers were encouraged by Flood, who held a high command under Charlemont and Grattan, and whose rhetorical powers gave him a strong sway over men already fired into more than the ordinary heat of factions. After the display of much violent feeling, the temper and discretion of Charlemont at length prevailed in bringing

back the meeting to their original object, and after some motions in favour of reform, and a short address had been drawn up in vindication of themselves, and the motives of their conduct, they consented to an adjournment *sine die*.

From this out, the volunteers declined; the government followed their motions with a vigilant eye, and took advantage of each unwary step; the institution of the fencible regiments thinned their ranks, and deprived them of their best officers; the moderation of one part divided them from the violence of the other; and they soon ceased to be formidable as an army, and were reduced to a factious party which the better part of their own leaders lent a hand to repress. But to the latest hours of their existence they were watched over by Charlemont with an interest which must have been mingled with regret, as he observed their decline, and remembered the part they had played in '79 and '82. We find him, even to the year 1790, paying frequent visits to the north to review his corps; and, probably, so long as his health permitted him to give them this countenance and support they continued to exist.\* To the last they were an object of suspicion and dislike to the government, and, but for the fear of giving the old movement a new impulse, their natural decline would have been hastened. As to Charlemont, we cannot help fancying, that having stood on the brink of the revolutionary precipice, and looked down, for a time at least he retreated from his advanced politics, and even threw an arm round government. The great danger he had escaped certainly modified his opposition, and he accepted two honours from successive Lord-lieutenants, which he would, there is little doubt, have rejected at an earlier period. Lord Temple, who rightly appreciated the character and position of Charlemont, wrote to ask for his support; and in the stern and unsparing reforms which he himself carried into every branch of the executive—reforms so much appreciated that on his departure he was escorted to the place of embarkation by the volunteers, who lined the streets through which he passed,—Lord Charlemont lent him, as may be supposed, the most cordial assistance. From this nobleman he accepted the riband of the order of St. Patrick, an order which was founded during his lord-lieutenancy. Lord Temple's successor, Lord Northington, to whom he also rendered much valuable assistance, was so impressed with the disadvantage of his not occupying a seat in the privy council, that he pressed him to accept that honour—an offer accepted by Lord Charlemont on the condition, which was at once complied with, that it should also be conferred on his friend Mr. Grattan. Many other offers and advances were made to him at different periods of his life, which he found it a delicate and embarrassing duty to decline; for his position compelled him while sometimes supporting government in measures he approved, at other times to give them the most uncompromising resistance. The strong point of his character was, that though not always knowing where to make a stand, he was never swayed by popular flattery, or the desire to do the popular thing, from what his conscience dictated; while he was equally proof against the flattery of his equals and influ-

\* Mr. Massey, in his history of the reign of George III., erroneously states that in the year 1785 they had quite disappeared.



ence in high places. He was tender and sensitive, and often in private felt the painful embarrassment of his position; but in his public conduct and language he showed at all times a noble and commanding front, serene, unswerving, and unshaken.

In 1786 Lord Charlemont was elected President of the Royal Irish Academy, an honour which he no doubt valued more than any the government could bestow. This institution, founded in the preceding year—a child of the University of Dublin, of which its earliest working members were fellows, has done more than anything, with the exception of the University, to raise the character of Ireland and Irishmen among the civilized nations of Europe. It was the first successful attempt of literary and scientific men to establish some centre for communication and concert, in which the various subjects of human inquiry might throw light upon each other, and be seen in their mutual relations and relative proportions. Lord Charlemont contributed two essays to its transactions; one to prove from the works of the Florentine Fazio delli Uberti the antiquity of the Irish woollen manufacture, and another on the custom by which in the island of Lesbos the rights of primogeniture are by a curious freak held by the eldest daughter. While upon the subject of his literary performances, we may mention that he published an annotated edition of the Sonnets of Petrarch. The only important political question in which we find Lord Charlemont, as he advanced in years, taking a very prominent part, was the Regency question in 1788. In the following year the members of the opposition met at his house; and it was he who moved the address to the Prince of Wales, asking him to take the regency of Ireland. He afterwards went over with the Duke of Leinster, and presented the address to his Royal Highness. In later life Lord Charlemont joined more freely in social intercourse with the political circles of Dublin. A very different class of men were now in parliament from the wretched crew that filled its benches when he first began to take a part in affairs. None had contributed more to give a high tone to at least a large body of Irishmen, than Lord Charlemont himself. It was about this time (1789) that he exerted himself in the formation of a Whig Club—a sort of revival of the “Monks of St. Patrick.” Lord Charlemont was always a constant attendant in the Irish House of Commons, but in his old age, when his friends were in the full strength of their eloquence, it was usual to remark that he was more a member of the Commons than of the Lords. The pleasure he derived from the frequent displays of successful wit and the best style of Irish eloquence, must have in some degree compensated for the disquietude caused by the gloomy course of events which gave occasions for that display. In the country, and particularly in that part of it for the tranquillity of which he was responsible, those wretched quarrels about nothing, and on that account all the more bitter and inappeasable, again called for his lordship’s interference. His influence was still potent, and his name, unconnected with faction, was respected by all; he therefore felt himself bound, though little equal to the exertion, to take a part in putting down the disturbances. The Peep o’ day Boys (Protestants) and Defenders (Roman Catholics) drew from him a bitter reflection, on the inconsistency of those who a few years before were proclaiming religious equality and the brotherhood of all

Irishmen, and now were cutting the throats of those they had so lately proclaimed their brothers. He himself, though at the time disapproving of that declaration, was at last converted by the reasoning of Plunket. After a long conversation in reference to a nomination to the borough of Charlemont, the reasonings and eloquence of the young advocate prevailed, and Charlemont acknowledged to a friend, "Plunket has overcome an old prejudice." In 1791 a most unmerited insult was offered him by the Irish administration, who resented his public conduct, by separating into two the lord-lieutenancy of Armagh—which had been for more than a century in his family,—and this without even the courtesy of a private intimation. Lord Charlemont thought it due to himself to resign; and this act drew out a warm expression of feeling from a large body of the freeholders.—"Your Lordship," they said, "was governor in times rather more perilous than the present—in times, shall we say, when the kingdom had no government, or none but that received from the strength, wisdom, and spirit of the people, so often, and with such zealous integrity, informed, advised, and led by your lordship." In 1793 Lord Charlemont had the misfortune to lose his second son, a promising lad of seventeen. The darkening of the times, combined with this domestic affliction, and fast failing health, to break down the old lord. He beheld the symptoms of national confusion extend from the French capital as a centre, and spread like an eclipse over all the surrounding shores. At last, when the mischief broke out, he hastened to his post as he had often done before, and saw the rebellion pass over Ireland, and most of the work of a noble life undone. And then came the political consequence, the project of the union, against which, with that true band of friends and patriots with whom he had acted through so many vicissitudes, he took an earnest part; but he lived long enough to see inevitably approaching, the complete and final loss of Irish independence, for which he had adventured so much and laboured so long. The protracted agitation of spirit and nerve kept up during this exciting struggle, completed the break-up of his constitution. He expired on the 4th of August 1799, in the 70th year of his age.

## HENRY FLOOD.

BORN A. D. 1732.—DIED A. D. 1791.

It is difficult to trace satisfactorily to their English original, families long settled in Ireland; and as, by becoming settlers, they adopted a new nationality, and completely severed all ties with their English relations, it is unnecessary to go back with our researches beyond their arrival and settlement. Of course it may be assumed that the settlers bettered their position by the change; and in an uncivilized country took a higher rank than they had held in their own. It is not therefore surprising that in most cases no exact information should be forthcoming, as to English ancestry; and that beyond the founder of the family in Ireland, the attempts to establish a genealogy should be in most cases obvious guesswork. With this proviso we may state, that Mr. Flood's family is said to have dwelt in Kent; and that a cer-



tain Sir Thomas Fludd, claimed as a direct ancestor, was warden of the Cinque ports, and bore other offices of trust and honour, under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. We feel on firm ground when we come to Mr. Flood's grandfather, Major Francis Flood, who served in Ireland with his regiment in the wars of the Commonwealth, and married a Miss Warden, heiress of considerable estates in the county of Kilkenny. Three families descended from this marriage, settled respectively at Farmley, Floodhall, and Paulstown. The eldest son, Warden Flood, owner of Farmley, went to the bar and became chief justice of the King's bench. Of two sons and a daughter, Henry only survived, and thus became sole heir; and although certain informalities in the union of his parents afterwards led to a verdict of illegitimacy, his father had fortunately taken the precaution of settling Farmley upon him at his marriage. He entered the university of Dublin at the age of sixteen; but the prospect of being rich without effort, prevented him from paying much attention to his studies. Idle, clever, well-off, and the son of a chief justice, he was of course taken up by the fast and dissipated set in the university, who corrupted his morals, and starved his fine natural abilities. After three years of this training, which would have done less injury to a duller lad, his father removed him to Oxford. By that time the moral harm was irreparable, and had been firmly knitted into his character; but under the care of Dr. Markham, afterwards archbishop of York, a good classical scholar, and a man of great worth, he made a new start in respect of his studies, and became an industrious reading man. Probably the contact with a higher class of associates than he had hitherto found convinced him that untrained genius could not compete with well-cultivated abilities and extensive knowledge, and acted as a strong stimulus to one so full of ambition and self-love to exert himself vigorously. The same disposition that made him in Dublin endeavour to shine among rakes, here made him strive to shine among men of character and attainments. It is not we believe doing Mr. Flood injustice to say, that vanity rather than ambition was his ruling passion; at this part of his life it redeemed him from a course of dissipation; but such a motive never makes a noble career in the end. During his residence at Oxford, he endeavoured to improve his great natural power of language by making translations from the Greek and Roman orators; Demosthenes seems to have been his particular study; and the excellence of his translations and the merit of some poetical effusions, show that his taste and classical proficiency had attained already to a considerable growth. After two years he graduated and entered his name in the Temple, where several succeeding years were spent in steady and persevering study of the law. During the administration of the Duke of Bedford, he returned to Ireland to stand for his own county; but though he succeeded in being returned to parliament, he wisely abstained from taking a part in the debates, until he should have mastered the details of business, and the usages of the house. We wonder at this reticence in Mr. Flood; particularly remembering the precipitancy with which, when his judgment was more matured, he rushed into debate in the English House of Commons. The dissolution of parliament soon followed his election; but he received the help of many influential friends—Lord Charlemont among

the rest—and was again elected for the county of Kilkenny. The first opportunity which he took of joining in debate was on the occasion of a motion in 1761, that the Portuguese, then at war with Spain, might be permitted to raise six regiments of the Roman Catholic persuasion in Ireland. We have already alluded to the debate; the mover was Mr. William Gerard Hamilton; and his speech was that single great effort of eloquence\* on which his fame rests, and on the record of which, for some inexplicable reason, one is perpetually stumbling. Among those who replied, Mr. Flood was the most applauded; he spoke from the opposition benches, and attacked the whole administration of the government with so much severity as to call forth lively demonstrations of popular approbation and ministerial resentment. In the same year in which he made his successful *debut* in parliament, he was fortunate enough to marry into the Beresfords—the greatest of all the Families—one which to a late period monopolised a large proportion of the public patronage of Ireland. It will be remembered that it was with a representative of this house, the Commissioner of Broad Streets, who was at the head of all the jobbery in the country, that Lord Fitzwilliam long subsequently had the temerity to engage in a trial of strength, which resulted in his being driven from the lord-lieutenancy. Lady Frances Maria Beresford brought Mr. Flood, besides connexion, a large fortune. Indeed, with this marriage prosperity seemed to flow in upon him from all sides; his father, as before mentioned, settled on him the family estates; and his uncle left him a bequest that put him in immediate possession of a very considerable sum of money. Mr. Flood's ambition or vanity was now satisfied for the time by the dignity and importance attaching to the position of a wealthy country gentleman. He retired to Farnley with his wife, and spent, we may conceive, the most enjoyable portion of his life in country pursuits and literary idleness. There he formed the centre of a distinguished and cultivated society, such as was not then to be found in other parts of Ireland. Henry Grattan and Sir Hercules Langrishe were among the number of his associates and friends. The marriage of Mr. Grattan's sister to Mr. Bushe of Kilfane made him a frequent visitor in that part of the county of Kilkenny. Between him and Mr. Flood a close intimacy soon commenced; they entered together into the study of politics and oratory, in both of which Mr. Flood had already attained to the proficiency of an adept. They wrote and communicated their compositions to each other; they argued and often contended together in formal harangue. Private theatricals, which had long been fashionable in the most distinguished circles of society in Ireland, were introduced at Knocktopher (Sir H. Langrishe's residence), Kilfane, and Farnley; and the principal parts were acted by persons soon to occupy the most conspicuous places in the history of their time. Private theatricals formed a very marked feature in the social life of that period. Upon one of these occasions Mr. Flood acted Macbeth to Mr. Grattan's Macduff, from which it may be inferred that Mr. Flood exceeded Mr. Grattan in dramatic ability, as much as

\* See a suggestion with regard to this speech in our life of Edmund Burke.



he was himself excelled by the latter in originality of mind, and the true, as distinguished from the mimic, fire of eloquence.

An unhappy event marked this period of Mr. Flood's life. On the occasion of the new election which took place after the passing of the Octennial bill, he had an unfortunate quarrel with Mr. Agar, his colleague in the representation of Callan. It terminated according to the barbarous custom of the day, in a hostile meeting at Holyhead, in which Agar was slightly wounded. Mr. Agar, who was the challenger, was vexed at having missed Flood, and soon after challenged him to a second meeting. The following letter was written by an eye-witness of this fatal duel, and contains the fullest as well as the most authoritative statement we can offer.

*Mr. Bushe to Mr. Grattan.*

September, 1769.

MY DEAR HARRY,—I must postpone everything to inform you that on Friday last a duel was fought between Harry Flood and Mr. Agar, the elder, in Dunmore park, near Kilkenny, in which Mr. Agar was unfortunately killed. As Mr. Flood was not the challenger, and as it was out of his power to avoid it, he has nothing to reproach himself with. The cause was a case of pistols belonging to Mr. Agar, which one Keogh lost at Burnchurch, in the riot, about ten months ago. I hear that the unfortunate gentleman had often asked Mr. Flood about them, who always "said he had them not, and was not accountable for them." But on Friday they produced a challenge, to my great surprise; for if there was any offence, it was as much an offence any day these ten months as it was on that day. They stood at about fourteen yards asunder. Before they fired, Mr. Agar questioned Mr. Flood about the pistols in a threatening and offensive manner. Mr. Flood answered, very deliberately, "You know I will not answer you while you ask me in that manner." Mr. G. Bushe, who was Mr. Flood's friend, said something to Mr. Agar to induce him to ask in another manner, and not to bring such an affair upon himself so needlessly,—but without effect. He laid down one pistol, and rested the other on his arm to take aim. Both Mr. G. B. and Mr. Roth, his own friend, called on him to fire fairly.—N.B., besides the unfairness of using a rest, it was particularly unfair at that time, for Mr. A. had proposed they should stand alongside a quickset hedge, but Mr. Roth declared *there should be no levelling*. Upon their calling out he desisted and took another posture, and fired first, and missed. He then took up his other pistol, and then said to Mr. Flood, "Fire, fire you scoundrel!" Mr. Flood thereupon presented his pistol, which he held all this time with the muzzle turned upwards, and shot Mr. A. through the heart. Mr. A.'s left breast was towards him, Mr. A. being left-handed. He expired in a few minutes afterwards, without speaking anything articulate.

This unfortunate event rendered it necessary that Mr. Flood should stand his trial before he could appear in public. The delay which occurred before this mere formality could be got over was attributed

by some to a design of the Castle authorities to keep him out of the way while some important questions were before parliament; but it was really due to his not being able to obtain a special commission, and being obliged to wait for the ordinary spring assizes. Lord Charlemont, who interested himself on Mr. Flood's behalf, thus explained the obstacle:—"I spoke [to the Chancellor] of your letters as very sensible and ingenious, but think that you a little mistook Blackstone. The writ *de malo* relates to a commission of gaol delivery; but that which you desire is a commission of oyer and terminer." At last, however, it was supposed that the compliance of the legal authorities was secured, and Lord Charlemont wrote to Flood, saying that the judges were likely to be Henn and Smith, as the two juniors, and asking if he would prefer others. So much was a trial for such an affair regarded at the period as a mere formality, to be disposed of as easily and pleasantly as possible, that this tampering with justice was not considered dishonourable, even by such a scrupulously honourable man as Charlemont. However, Flood was not such a favourite with the government that they were disposed to allow this cumbrous machinery to be put in motion to facilitate his early return to public life. The commission was not issued, and he was tried and acquitted at the spring assizes in Kilkenny (1770).

By this time, as may be inferred from the supposition that the government desired to keep him out of the way, Mr. Flood had embarked in his political career,—being no longer satisfied by the position, which had at first contented his ambition, of a county magistrate. He had already acquired the reputation of being the best speaker in the Irish house of commons, and as the parliamentary reports were then mere outlines of arguments, only a few expressions of peculiar force being preserved of the language, we are obliged to found our judgment, to a great extent, upon the opinion of contemporaries. We shall quote from a sketch attributed to his friend and neighbour, Sir H. Langrishe, which thus describes his perfections:—"Indeed, upon whatever subject this champion of our liberty speaks, he does so with so much knowledge, accuracy, and perspicuity, that one would imagine *that* subject had been the particular and chief object of his inquiry. Does he make calculations?—What mathematician more exact? Does he plead his country's cause?—What breast does not glow with patriotism? He seems nearly to approach that great original Demosthenes—whom he so well understands. He has all his fine brevity and perspicuity." If this praise appear somewhat exaggerated, we must remember that parliamentary eloquence was then new to the Irish house of commons, where it was only beginning to be cultivated by a few eminent members. There is nothing that a despotic government abhors so much as eloquence, and it was a good sign for the country when it began to be displayed in parliament. Mr. Flood was therefore regarded with extreme aversion by the powers of darkness at the Castle, and with marvel and delight by the patriotic among his countrymen, who were never tired of praising him. In rather a backward state of public taste, no fault could be found with his style—he was a very Demosthenes; but when he came to the light—when he spoke in the English house of commons, or even contended



with Henry Grattan in the parliament at home, he was seen in his proper dimensions—a very eloquent speaker, but not a Demosthenes.

Towards the latter end of Lord Townshend's administration it was harassed by numerous literary attacks, among which may be distinguished a collection of satirical pieces, published under the name of "Barateriana," of which the idea was taken from Don Quixote, the lord-lieutenant being represented in the character of Sancho. This was the joint production of Langrishe, Grattan, and Flood. The letters which have been clearly ascertained to be Flood's, display great command of topics and ingenuity in their manipulation to serve the writer's ends—but they clearly show that he was *not* Junius—though written in plain and undisguised imitation of that writer's style, and sufficiently close to make Mr. Flood's admirers fancy him to be the author of the famous letters. A comparison of the two styles shows a marked inferiority in the use of the same weapons in Mr. Flood's composition, and that the two writers lived in different worlds of sentiment and habitual association. The Junius mystery has been elucidated; and we only notice this studied resemblance, to point out as a characteristic trait the pains taken by Mr. Flood to make his friends suppose him to be Junius.

In 1773, he paid a visit to England, and was received in political circles with much distinction. He entered on this occasion into some negotiations with Lord North, which were of course supposed to have a patriotic tendency—perhaps, as was said, to impress on the English minister views favourable to Irish commerce, or to recommend a tax on absentees. It may possibly have been owing to the good impression which he produced on the head of the government, that in 1775, when Lord Harcourt was lord-lieutenant, he was pressed to accept the office of vice-treasurer, one of the highest and most profitable under the crown in Ireland. After a seemingly demur and considerable negotiation he yielded his consent—a step by which he irrecoverably lost caste, alienated his friends, and exposed himself in after years to severe and galling attacks. Mr. Flood, when he returned to the popular party, like most converts (in whom the impulse of conversion levels all moderation), went to the furthest extremes, more than regaining his old popularity with the multitude; but he never was fully forgiven by his friends. The gloss which he put upon his acceptance of office failed to satisfy any one but himself; those who knew his inmost thoughts, and were best qualified to form a judgment on his conduct, thought very badly of it. No man knew him better than Grattan; and his celebrated invective in 1783, brief as it is, could neither be added to nor subtracted from to make out a case of unprincipled desertion, unexampled in the leader of an opposition. The excuse which Mr. Flood offered was, that by joining the government he was in a better position to serve his country, than by continuing to lead a hopeless opposition in the house of commons;—but this is the usual plea of deserters, and one which, if credited, would make the desertion of party an act of heroism. In some men we might believe it to be so; the whole life will sometimes carry off an action which viewed alone would be deemed discreditable; but Mr. Flood did not inspire those who knew him most intimately, or who have looked at him from a distance in the lens of history, with a confidence that nothing could shake. On the contrary, he had the misfor-

tune to impress those members both of the government and of the opposition, who were in the habit of transacting business with him, as a politician on whom they could place little or no dependence.\* Mr. Secretary Orde described him to Mr. Pitt in his private report, based no doubt upon experimental knowledge, as the most unprincipled man he had ever met. It may happen, however, that he has been too hardly dealt with; we must correct the estimate of a government secretary by remembering that Mr. Flood had but lately abandoned the government, while Mr. Grattan's invective was in reply to an insulting attack. It is probable that Flood, with his usual vanity, really thought he could make himself master of the policy of the government he joined, —and that those whom he left indignant would soon see the good effects of his apostacy, and acknowledge that he had done well. If, on looking at the result, we see that his conduct in accepting a lucrative office did lead to actual good, it would be but fair to allow that such good may have been foreseen and intended. We believe that he made certain stipulations in taking office; and in the council he lent his aid to obtaining a limited mutiny bill, the rejection of altered money bills, and the important concession that those which proceeded from the privy council should not be defended by the Crown. The office of vice-treasurer had never before been held by an Irishman, and this was one of Mr. Flood's alleged reasons for accepting it, to establish a precedent for his countrymen; we think, however, that his defence would have been better without this addition, as the advantage of one office more for place hunters was wholly disproportionate to the sacrifice of political inconsistency; and to see great reasons backed up by little ones is apt to excite distrust.

In the same year (1775), lord Harcourt's government was further strengthened by the acquisition of Mr. Hussey Burgh, who was raised to the office of prime sergeant. From this office Mr. Hutchinson, another who had been lured over from the opposition several years before, was now translated to the provostship of Trinity college, Dublin, —probably to prevent his retracing his steps. The Earl of Charlemont, shocked and grieved at the secession of two such distinguished followers as Flood and Burgh, expressed clearly but kindly his opinion of the step which the former was about to take, in committing himself to the stream of influences so charged with imputation and seduction. Lord Charlemont's biographer, Mr. Hardy, whose work was published in 1812, has affirmed that from this period there was an entire cessation of intercourse between the earl and Flood; but the correspondence published in 1820 shows that they still maintained without any breach a cordial intimacy. But though the step which Mr. Flood had taken did not make Lord Charlemont drop his acquaintance, or cease to address him in terms of affection unusual among men, it of course severed them politically. Lord Charlemont's brother having been lost in the passage from England, the borough which he had represented would under previous circumstances have been offered to Flood; but as matters stood, this was impossible; and thus Grattan was introduced to parlia-

\* Mr. Massey calls him "one of the most factious and unprincipled members of that factious and corrupt assembly."



ment by the defection of his former friend and future rival. It is curious to observe how the interests of these two men clashed from the very beginning of Grattan's public career. Mr. Flood held office under the administrations of Lords Harcourt and Buckingham. In 1780, the volunteers having won their first great moral victory in the preceding year, and the tide being evidently on the turn, he made the discovery that his opinions did not coincide with those of the government, and accordingly resigned office. When parliament met he stood forward, without hesitation, in the character of an opposition orator; and he was complimented by Mr. Ponsonby, "who rejoiced to see the right honourable gentleman, after an eclipse of seven years, burst forth in such a blaze of eloquence." Grattan and Burgh (who only remained with the government for one year), "ran across the house and embraced him," the latter declaring that this was the man whom the highest office in the land could not corrupt.

To Mr. Ponsonby's congratulation Mr. Flood replied,—“The honourable gentleman has said that I am emerged from a seven years' eclipse. It is true, I supported Lord Harcourt's administration; but was I eclipsed, when on several occasions I went not with them, and stated my reasons for not doing so? I also supported Lord Buckingham. On that eventful day when a free trade was demanded was I eclipsed? When a bill of rights was the subject of debate did I shrink from the question?” Mr. Flood no doubt thought that having emitted occasional rays of his former light he had been simply under a cloud; and that when it was his pleasure to shine out again with his original brilliancy, other lights which had ruled the dark interval should pale before his brightness. He had been leader of the opposition when he left it, and on coming back he found Henry Grattan occupying his old position, and not at all disposed to retire in his favour. To outbid Mr. Grattan immediately became a necessity to his vain nature, and the opportunity soon presented itself. We have already spoken of the repeal of the 6th George I., and the other accompanying acts of concession, which gave independence to the Irish legislature.—An address was proposed by Mr. Grattan expressive of the consent and acceptance with which the measure was received by the Irish house of commons. To this address Mr. Flood proposed an objection, which led to a warm and interesting debate. The offer of the government went no further than a repeal of the obnoxious statute; Mr. Flood contended for a declaratory act expressly renouncing on the part of the British parliament the right of legislating for Ireland. It cannot be denied that this was necessary to make the independence of the Irish parliament as secure as it was complete; Ireland might not long be in a position to dictate terms; in the mere silence of statute law there could be no security against the recurrence of similar usurpations, nor was there as yet any certain proof that if the British parliament should regain its supremacy it would not make the same flagitious use it had formerly made of it, to cripple Irish trade, and govern in the interests of English manufacturers; unless on the supposition of a fraudulent intent, an express renunciation could add nothing to the concession, and it was assuredly the proper complement of the repeal of the statute asserting this misused supremacy; but at the same time we think that Mr. Flood, even against his own judgment, ought to have deferred

to the opinion of the younger leader who had already obtained so much without his help,—and who, having used his victory as far at the moment as he thought generous, had a difficulty which Mr. Flood could not feel, in immediately asking for more. When Lord Charlemont had wished to give Fox time, knowing that he had the best intentions, but was in a position of difficulty, Grattan had insisted on the instant repeal of the statute of supremacy. Having exacted this, he felt the generous compunction of the victor, and wished to show some consideration for a friendly government which had just made a considerable surrender; but Mr. Flood, coming up at the end of the fight, and seeing his former friends down, cried out, to have no mercy on them, and to push to the utmost the victory in which he had no part. This placed Mr. Grattan in a painful position. On the one hand he was unwilling for the time to press the government further; on the other, he was aware that in opposing Flood's motion his conduct would be ascribed to envy, and his moderation set down by unscrupulous opponents as treachery to the popular cause. None felt more sensitively than Mr. Grattan what the people thought of him; but no man ever allowed it to affect his judgment less; and though, to be misinterpreted and reviled by his countrymen nearly broke his heart, he endured to be misinterpreted and reviled rather than swerve one step from the path his conscience dictated. In this he was the opposite of Mr. Flood. Both loved popularity; nothing is more ignoble than to despise it; but one regarded it as an end, the other as an accident. Hence Mr. Grattan firmly opposed the increased demand, and though, for so doing, he was subjected to much misrepresentation and unpopularity, he had a sufficient following, combined with the government forces, to defeat it for the time. But though Mr. Flood was foiled at first, circumstances arose which enabled him to carry his point. A few weeks after the repeal of the 6th George I., Ireland was named in a British act which laid some restraint on the cotton trade. A decision by Lord Mansfield on an Irish writ of error, brought into prominent notice the appellate jurisdiction of the English house of lords. The case decided by Lord Mansfield had, it is true, been lodged before the repeal of the statute of supremacy. But, in giving his decision, his lordship asserted the right on more general grounds. He alleged, "that he knew of no law depriving the British court of its vested jurisdiction." It was ill-naturedly said, that Lord Mansfield's anxiety to retain the jurisdiction was occasioned by his investments in Irish mortgages, from which he obtained a higher per-centage than was procurable by English investment; and if so, it is curious to be able to trace great political changes to so mean a cause. Soon after an act was passed in the British parliament regulating the importation of sugar from St. Domingo to all the king's dominions in Europe; and this act which, whether intentionally or inadvertently, had a constructive application to Ireland, excited a strong sense of insufficient security against English encroachments. The excitement was increased by Lord Abingdon's attempt to introduce an act (which, however, was not allowed even to rest on the table of the House of Lords), to re-establish the supremacy of England; and, in supporting it, he denied that the king and parliament were competent to give up the national rights. The state of the public mind in Ireland



made it obvious to the government that something further was to be done; and in the following session they brought in an express act of renunciation (23 George III.) "for removing and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or might arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the parliament and courts of Ireland, in matters of legislation and judicature." Of this act the whole language was clear and unequivocal, and embodied all the objected points with the utmost fullness.

This act of renunciation did not restore harmony to the opposition. The jealousy of the leaders spread to their followers,—the moderate party siding with Mr. Grattan, the violent with Mr. Flood. The protracted discussions upon the question of renunciation or repeal, embittered each side against the other; and when the matter in dispute was decided, those feelings engendered by it remained and prevented a reunion of the party. There came to be in the opposition two opinions on every subject,—the moderates, wholly separated from the extreme, were perhaps too moderate; while the counsels of the extreme, being untampered by the moderation of Mr. Grattan's adherents, became more violent and inconsiderate. The latter declared that the majority of the Irish parliament having decided for the sufficiency of a measure which, immediately after, the British parliament was obliged to admit was unsatisfactory, demonstrated the necessity of a parliamentary reform. The volunteers were again roused into action, and the opinion that the parliament did not represent the people, became the prominent subject of complaint. With the volunteers Mr. Flood now obtained the highest popularity; and when, very shortly after, the memorable quarrel between him and Mr. Grattan occurred, he was addressed by them on that occasion to express their sense of his services, and to censure the uncalled for and unmerited severity of Mr. Grattan's attack.

Of the quarrel here adverted to it is necessary to offer an outline. The brief administration of Lord Temple was succeeded by that of Lord Northington in 1783, who was appointed with the celebrated coalition ministry in the same year. A new parliament met in Ireland on the 14th of October. The people had shown their gratitude by the exclusion of both their great leaders, Grattan and Flood, who were compelled to have recourse for their seats to private boroughs. About a fortnight after the meeting of parliament, Sir H. Cavendish having moved that the state of the kingdom required every practicable retrenchment, Mr. Flood, as had been his wont, entered into some very severe comments on the government, and moved, as an amendment, "that the country demanded retrenchment." Grattan, who was opposed to the original motion, was still more opposed to its being put in an offensive form; he believed that his rival was neither honest nor truly patriotic; and conceived that this system of outbidding on every question, arose, not from conviction, but from a design to discredit him and his followers in the eyes of the country, by making them appear to be the opponents of popular measures. He perceived, perhaps, that whether intentionally or not, Flood would prove the ruin of the party which he had once betrayed, and which now idolised him, and would possibly make the abolition of the volunteers a matter of absolute necessity, unless the country was to be put under the government of military

law. Both leaders were already in secret such enemies as can only be made from former friends, and were prepared to seize upon the first occasion for the discharge of their mutual animosity. Mr. Grattan replied to the amendment in a tone of sarcasm; Mr. Flood claimed his right to reply on a personal charge, and, in replying, retorted with a degree of acrimonious point and imputations so very personal and galling, that he probably felt, as the last sentence of his speech expresses, a triumphant sense of having crushed his antagonist—"I have now done. Give me leave to say if the gentleman enters often into this sort of colloquy with me, he will not have much to boast of at the end of the session."

Mr. Flood's invective, for such it was, was highly creditable to his oratorical powers, and contained passages which, had they been the result of preparation, would deserve the praise of finished composition. Among other innuendoes of the most cutting severity, was one which could not fail to provoke, and indeed demanded, the utmost power of retort. He hinted that Mr. Grattan had been all along a stipendiary patriot, consistent in nothing save in taking that course which seemed, for the time being, most profitable to himself. He had, however, been premature in his self-congratulation; he little knew, as in his usual measured tones he attacked Mr. Grattan's personal honesty and political consistency, what terrific thunders he was awakening. Mr. Grattan's reply remains as yet unparalleled among the reports of parliamentary encounter for its condensed and compendious severity. "It is not," said he, "the slander of the bad tongue of a bad character that can defame me. I maintain my reputation in public and private life; no man who has not a bad character can say I ever deceived him,—no country has ever called me a cheat. I will suppose a public character, a man not now in this house, but who formerly might have been here. I will suppose it was his constant practice to abuse every one who differed from him, and betray every man who trusted him. I will suppose him active. I will begin from his cradle and divide his life into three stages,—in the first, he was intemperate; in the second, corrupt; and in the third, seditious. Suppose him a great egotist, his honour equal to his oath, and I will stop him and say, Sir, your talents are not so great as your life is infamous; you were silent for years, and you were silent for money. When affairs of consequence to the nation were debating, you might have been passing by these doors like a guilty spirit, just waiting for the moment of putting the question, when you might pop in and give your venal vote; or you might be seen hovering over the dome like an ill-omened bird of night, with sepulchral notes and cadaverous aspect and broken beak, ready to stoop and pounce upon your prey. You can be trusted by no man; the people cannot trust you; the ministers cannot trust you; you deal out the most impartial treachery to both. You tell the nation it is ruined by other men, while it is betrayed by you. You fled from the embargo; you fled from the mutiny bill; you fled from the sugar bill. I therefore tell you in the face of your country, before all the world, and to your beard, that you are not an honest man." Mr. Flood was for the moment completely bewildered by the overpowering effect of this rejoinder. a fact which



is perfectly apparent in the few sentences of reply which have been preserved by tradition. These two gentlemen, after having for two hours been allowed to discharge their whole indignation upon each other by a house of commons which entered with all the keen interest of a cockpit into this display of rival force, were from something of the same spirit suffered, after it was over, to steal away for the purpose of following up their quarrel in the way most usual at the period. After a little time had passed in the confusion which immediately followed, orders were given for the arrest of the parties. Mr. Flood was taken, but made his escape from the sheriffs. A challenge from Mr. Flood ensued; but after some days spent in negotiation, they were both served with a warrant from the king's bench, and bound over to keep the peace towards each other for two years. A few days after Mr. Flood was allowed by the house to enter into a formal vindication of his character, in which he displayed very considerable eloquence and talent.

The quarrel just related had the effect of putting an end to the acquaintance of these two great orators. Upon a subsequent occasion Mr. Flood saluted Mr. Grattan when they chanced to pass each other in the streets; this advance, however, was so coldly received that he took care not to repeat it. His wish to conciliate was further shown by his presiding at some meetings where resolutions were passed complimentary to Mr. Grattan. But the opposition between the leaders, instead of being diminished, was increased by subsequent events.

The Convention of Delegates, as already narrated in the life of Lord Charlemont, took in hand the matter of Reform, and Mr. Flood was chosen to shape their reform bill, and undertake the championship of it in the house. He had seen what great things had been achieved by Grattan and Charlemont, in the strength of the volunteers; and supposed that if he could obtain possession of that same force with which they had overawed the parliament of England, he would soon hold the position of a dictator in the parliament of Ireland. But in the course of making himself the leader of the volunteers by becoming the slave of their folly, and endeavouring to force upon parliament a measure for which no party was as yet prepared, he showed that utter want of judgment which generally accompanies overweening vanity. The motion for leave to introduce his scheme of reform was at once rejected by a large majority; his measure was not even allowed to cross the threshold, although the volunteers "demonstrated" both in the galleries and in the precincts of the house in great numbers. This honourable firmness on the part of the commons inflicted a fatal blow both on Mr. Flood and the volunteers. Neither ever recovered from their defeat. With respect to Mr. Flood's motion, as on the question of renunciation, he managed to be both right and wrong. Reform was undoubtedly needed, but the time was not opportune, and the manner of introducing it was such as the house could not have consented to without abdicating its functions. In Mr. Flood's favour, it must be admitted that the danger of popular interference had not yet been ascertained by events. It may doubtless have appeared to him that the state of Ireland was still such as to warrant the application of

an irregular force, while he overlooked the distinction of its application, through parliament, and to parliament. Like a far greater man, Mr. Fox, he was more a theorist in political science than a profound observer of those laws by which men and nations are governed; his reasoning was that of a casuist, built on dogmas and maxims, not on the studied precedents of jurists and political writers; he belonged to that eloquent class of public men who will reason on an abstract case, while the facts are momentarily bursting from their grasp. Should any one consider it wholly unnecessary to seek for such a justification of his conduct, we answer that it is impossible to avoid a strong impression that it was actuated by no regard to any consideration beyond the impulse of certain strong personal feelings. If he was not goaded by feelings of jealous rivalry and disappointed ambition, he was more or less than man. He had seen his vast popularity ebb, and the unrivalled championship, the thunder of the senate, pass into the hands of a junior, a rival, and a reputed enemy. On the other hand, he had been ill-treated by the government. Such a position was laden with the elements of desperation. The force of which he had put himself at the head, was the same which had prostrated and paralysed the forces of the castle, and had floated his rival to wealth, influence and fame. Such motives may have been unworthy of his understanding, and beneath his pride; but while we admit the possible uprightness and sincerity of his conduct, we cannot see that there is any justification for his want of judgment. It was not a time for reforming parliament, much as it needed reform; and more than reform would have been needed by any house of commons which should have adopted a resolution under the circumstances already described, at the point of the bayonet. And not only was there an extraordinary want of tact and discretion in the manner of bringing the matter forward, but it must have been obvious to any statesman with an eye for proportion, that having a view to the condition of the people, enough, and more than enough, had already been done. The truth is, the social and political constitutions of Ireland were advancing with unequal steps. The leading statesmen of the popular party took up their notions and principles from English books, the British constitution, and the debates in the British parliament; when they harangued on the affairs of Ireland, they were unconsciously thinking of England. They who now read their speeches have no very distinct notion of the state of affairs to which they were intended to apply. A great step in advance had been made when the independence of the judges, free trade, and the autonomy of the Irish parliament had been secured. For the sound working of these measures something more was wanting. It is a mistake into which statesmen are but too liable to fall, the idea that a system of enactments can amount to national prosperity, whereas on the other hand every measure in its application is wholly modified by circumstances over which legislation has no power. No freedom or no laws could have secured prosperity or good government to Ireland, or happiness and respectability to the people, until they had first made some advances wholly dependent on peace. When once fairly ingrafted, civilization with its consequences depend on quiet, and the workings of law depend on civilization. The tyranny of one stage of



civilization drops away link by link, according to a law not in the will of cabinets or councils, but in the hand of nature; laws become obsolete by an insensible course, and opinion works out institutions and enlightened laws by a process nearly as insensible. These effects cannot be, or never were, the work of popular will,—an instrument useful in desperate emergencies, but in these alone; useful to vindicate freedom, but not to fit people to be free. In Ireland the principal want was an interval of quiet; the utmost had been done that national excitement could at the time effect; and the balance of force was visibly shifted. Wise men would have applied their whole strength to secure, to give a rooted existence and sane working to the new elements of constitutional strength. To promote trade, to improve the condition of the peasantry, to remove the prejudices which operated against the country, and to quiet the turbulence which seemed to justify those prejudices, in a word, to look into the actual state of the Irish people, who were the least cared for, and the least consulted for in the struggle; the endeavour being to excite them into a state of exasperation fatal to their own best interests. The spirit of the people had already received some fierce impulses which a sagacious politician would desire to check; and the public mind was already commencing that fatal course which was to receive no effectual check until it obtained a permanent form and became the parent of all subsequent calamities. It was then that the irreconcilable hostility to law and order sprang up—a temper never done complaining—not to be civilized but by an iron domination; and which, by the impression of national fickleness and faithlessness it communicated, effectually drove away commercial confidence and exiled capital from a country offering the best advantages for its outlay. Such charges, were it necessary, we should be the most strenuous to repel. But in that day lessons were taught in Ireland which have never since ceased to be productive of evil. Even then there was an earnest of what was to come in the conduct of the Dublin mob who, resenting the independent conduct of parliament, broke into the house, pursued the unpopular members, and insulted and maltreated them in the streets.

Mr. Flood must have been deeply mortified at the discreditable results of a movement by which he had expected to be immortalized. The policy which had been intended to re-establish his declining influence put him henceforth into the position of a political outcast. He who had once been the foremost man in the country and the champion of the national party, was now in his age, and under the influence of a painful infirmity, with declining health and abated physical powers, doomed to the pains, anxiety, and jealousy of a strenuous rivalry with youth, enthusiasm, and transcendent talents. If he was conscious of the uprightness and sincerity of the principles on which he acted, he must have withered under the painful sense of misrepresentation; but if the reproaches of a rival had found any echo in his breast, he must have been touched by feelings not less painful; in either case he would have been more than human not to be mortified by the defection and dissent of early admirers and followers, the assaults of rivals, and the discreditable results of much labour and many high expectations. The reader will easily therefore comprehend the relief to Mr. Flood which must have grown out of the

prospect of being transferred to another scene of effort presenting a broader and loftier scope for his abilities; and how the dignity of a seat in the British senate seemed more than equivalent to the loss of influence in his own country. But he was rendered still more desirous of appearing on this greater battle-field by an insult received from the British minister, in advising that his name should be struck off the lists of the privy council. Mr. Flood accordingly entered into treaty with the Duke of Chandos for his borough of Winchester. The Duke appears to have been a warm political admirer of Mr. Flood and to have held similar opinions; and it is evident from published correspondence that then, as well as at an earlier period, there had been a friendly intercourse between them. At the same time Mr. Flood was unwilling to occupy a dependent seat, and purchased his election at the cost of £4,000. It was on the 3d of December, at the close of a long debate on Mr. Fox's East-India bill, that Mr. Flood entered the English house of commons for the first time as a member. His intention was to vote with Mr. Pitt against this measure; it was, perhaps, a wonted impulse that prompted him to rise to say a few words on the principle of the bill. His fame had travelled before him, and expectation had been strongly excited among the members, so that the instant effect of his standing up was to recall to their places many who were about to retire, to cause silence and the appearance of universal attention. Mr. Scott (Lord Eldon) had just delivered himself of a speech which has never perhaps been equalled for absurdity in the English house of commons. He had argued from the prophecies in the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation, and the elephantine awkwardness of his wit had kept the house in a convulsion. It was a singularly dangerous moment for a new speaker to rise; but Mr. Flood perceived the hush of expectation, and (according to the popular account), catching the feeling of the house, he could not resist its effect; he recoiled from the idea of disappointing a popular sensation so flattering to his pride, and suffered himself to be carried into details for which it is generally assumed he had made no previous preparation. Of this we must, by the way, express our doubt. For many days previous to the debate on the India question, he had received several letters and enclosures on the subject from the Duke of Chandos,\* and it may be presumed from others anxiously urging his journey that he might take a part in the discussion on the second reading of Mr. Fox's bill. On the very night of the debate he arrived after a forced march, which it is not easy to disjoin from some specific purpose. It is true he had not read the reports which lay on the table, and rather injudiciously commenced his speech by an exaggerated confession of ignorance decidedly calculated to prejudice against him an English auditory; but he showed in the course of his speech sufficient acquaintance with the subject for a display of oratory or a statement of general principles. He, however, still laboured under great disadvantages, among others that of a long and fatiguing journey; and were we even to assume that he had fully meditated the subject with a view to taking part in the discussion, yet it must be understood by any one in the habit of public speaking, (or

\* Correspondence, Letters 75, 76, and 77.



indeed private conversation,) that the effect of bodily fatigue or any cause which depresses the physical powers is to lower the spring of thought, and still more of language. Even with preparation Mr. Flood must have risen at a great disadvantage. His language, nevertheless, was not destitute of its accustomed correctness; his exposition of the subject was accurate and well digested; he had justly seized all the prominent points of the subject and viewed them in the same light as Mr. Pitt, a fact inconsistent with the assumption of an unprepared rising. But his language was cold, his manner tedious and embarrassed, and the arguments which he used already exhausted; the charm of eloquence was entirely wanting, and a coldly correct piece of trite argument was entirely inadequate to satisfy the demands of expectation, and far below the reputation of Mr. Flood. There was in truth another disadvantage of a kind less purely incidental, and which told fatally against him in the English parliament. On comparing the report of this speech with those of his most important speeches in the Irish house, we cannot discover in the latter any decided marks of superiority in style or substance; and we are very much inclined to think that the disappointment attending his *debut* in the English parliament is, in part at least, to be attributed to the effects of comparison and fallacious estimate. Mr. Flood's high reasoning powers had a value in the Irish house increased by the fact that they were there a distinction. In England, where men were accustomed to listen to Burke, Pitt, and Fox, orators who, in their different styles, had carried political eloquence to its highest perfection, and combined the powers which Flood possessed with others to which he had little pretension, such an auditory were sure to be disappointed at even the best possible fulfilment of an expectation which owed so much to exaggerated rumour. Besides the mistake of declaring himself destitute of that knowledge of the subject which the practical good sense of Englishmen makes them require in their speakers, he made a still more fatal error in declaring himself independent of both sides of the house, obtaining in consequence the sympathy of neither. The report given of his speech in Hansard, with these exceptions, displays much tact and precaution, and care to communicate to the house the difficulties under which he rose; but such statements, however, are either considered part of the rhetorician's art to magnify his performance, or if they are believed, create an unfavourable impression. Upon the whole, Mr. Flood's speech was thought by his admirers to have been incautious and premature, and was regarded as a failure by himself. The following passage from "Wraxall's Memoirs" gives a brief, and we think, fair account of the whole incident:—"Mr. Henry Flood, one of the most celebrated orators in the Irish parliament, (who had been just brought in for Winchester,) rising for the first time, proposed to speak in the English house of commons. His appearance produced an instant calm, and he was heard with universal curiosity while he delivered his sentiments, which were strongly inimical to the East India bill. Though possessing little local or accurate information on the immediate subject of the debate, he spoke with great ability and good sense; but the slow, measured, and sententious style of enunciation which characterised his eloquence, however calculated to excite admiration in the sister kingdom, appeared to

English ears cold, stiff, and deficient in some of the best recommendations to attention. Unfortunately too, for Flood, one of his own countrymen, Mr. Courtney, instantly opened on him such a battery of ridicule and wit, seasoned with allusions or reflections of the most personal and painful kind, which seemed to overwhelm the new member." With respect to this incident Mr. Moore has recorded the following statement from Lord Byron:—"When I met old Courtney, the orator, at Rogers, the poet's, in 1811-12, I was much taken with the portly remains of his fine figure, and the still acute quickness of his conversation. It was he who silenced Flood in the English house, by a crushing reply to the hasty *debut* of the rival of Grattan in Ireland."

"I asked Courtney—for I like to trace motives—if he had not some personal provocation, for the acrimony of his answer seemed to involve it? Courtney said, *he had*. That when in Ireland (being an Irishman) at the bar of the Irish house of commons, Flood had made a personal and unfair attack on himself, who, not being a member of that house, could not defend himself; and that some years afterwards the opportunity of retort offering in the English parliament he could not resist it."

A dissolution of parliament speedily followed, and the consequence to Mr. Flood was a vexatious controversy with the Duke of Chandos, who refused to put him in nomination a second time. Of this refusal, the grounds can be but imperfectly gathered from a tedious correspondence between the principals and their friends, occupying thirty quarto pages of Mr. Flood's correspondence. The duke seems to have involved both Mr. Flood and himself in inextricable embarrassments by his want of proper candour and firmness in not announcing his change of purpose and his feeling with regard to the political position which had been assumed by his nominee. He was offended at Mr. Flood's declaration of independence, but did not say so decidedly, and took refuge in subterfuges. He urged that it could not have been his intention to nominate Mr. Flood in perpetuity; that Mr. Flood had stated his wishes to be confined to the present parliament, and that he had engaged to vacate his seat should any dissatisfaction arise. It was evident, however, that there had been such an understanding as a man of honour must have felt binding, and on which Mr. Flood had undoubtedly a right to count. Occasional expressions had unmistakably conveyed to him the intention of the duke to support him at the next election, and it was even admitted that Mr. Flood had been authorized to take certain steps anticipatory of the event. The following passage from one of his letters to the duke shows the aspect the transaction presented from his point of view:—"The duke expressed his intention, as well after Christmas as before, that Mr. Flood should come in for Winchester this parliament. . . . Mr. Flood is free to say that intentions repeatedly declared in serious matters, and between serious men, embarking persons of a certain description in concerns of depth and moment, affecting their whole situation, held on to the last moment, and till opportunities are lost that cannot be retrieved:—he is free to say that, in his mind, and, as he conceives, in that of all mankind, such circumstances do constitute a



serious ground of obligation to all the feelings of honour." The truth appears to have been, that it was suggested to the duke by his attorney that the peculiar position assumed by Mr. Flood in parliament would be prejudicial to his interest and lower his political importance; and though the suggestion came late to give Mr. Flood seasonable notice of his change of intention, he thought it would be too much to expect that, on this account, he should compromise his public character. In the correspondence he is compelled to touch lightly and with extreme caution on his real objection to putting Mr. Flood a second time in nomination, reminding him that there is a consideration too delicate for explicit discussion. Possibly this consideration may have been one more unflattering to Mr. Flood than his independence of party, viz., his complete failure as a speaker in the English parliament. Mr. Flood either would not or did not understand the reason of the duke's embarrassment, and continued in a protracted correspondence to urge the understanding that had existed and the dishonourableness of not fulfilling it. Intermediate parties were called in, but seemed to shrink from the uncompromising violence of Mr. Flood, who evidently aimed at bringing the question to the decision of arms—the savage resort of the time. This result, however, was averted by the quiet obstinacy of the duke, who held his ground in the dispute without even appearing to recognise the angry tone and insinuated hostility of his adversary. Viewing the whole question, we are inclined to think that neither side showed in a very attractive light. On the duke's part there was much of that shuffling which arises from weakness of character; on Mr. Flood's inordinate self-assertion, want of considerateness, and an ungraceful display of indignant mortification.

In 1784 Mr. Flood received an invitation from some voters of the borough of Seaford; and Mr. Peter Burrowes, then a student in the temple, was employed to act as his representative on the occasion. After two defeats, arising from illegal conduct of adverse parties, which in each instance caused the returns to be cancelled, Mr. Flood was elected. On his re-entrance to the English parliament he was more successful than in his first essay. He became alive to the less tolerant atmosphere of an assembly not composed of blind admirers, but of practical Englishmen, impatient of mere rhetoric, and accustomed to listen to much greater speakers. Of course a man of so much ability was more or less able to suit himself to his audience; and less being expected, more was thought of his subsequent efforts. On several occasions he sustained his reputation by displays of oratorical power, not unworthy of his best days in the Irish house of commons. He was thus become a member of both legislatures, and was not remiss in either. Actively, though unsuccessfully, he continued to agitate the question of parliamentary reform in his own country. Against the commercial regulations introduced by Mr. Secretary Orde in 1785, Mr. Flood took a leading and prominent part, to which we can only now thus passingly allude; and we must mention as briefly, his efforts in the British parliament in 1787 on the proposal of a commercial treaty with France. In 1790, he attempted to introduce a scheme of reform in the English house of commons, a sufficient description of it being that it was very much what was actually carried by Lord Derby three-quarters of a

century later, and would have based the franchise upon residential household suffrage. So much the worse for the man who is in advance of his time, and so much the worse for the time to which his labour is lost. Mr. Flood made a very remarkable forecast of what the franchise would one day be; but it was his mistake to misjudge the time, in fancying that the then state of the people, to whom education had scarcely penetrated at all, would warrant parliament in bestowing on them such a trust. Nor did he perceive the extreme danger of democratic change at such a time, when the principles of the French revolution were abroad, and the people everywhere began to feel their strength without having attained the wisdom and self-control to use it with discretion. Mr. Flood had lived too long in the contemplation of tempestuous and irregular political workings to be easily alarmed, or to be keenly alive to the first vibrations of the wave of change, then in its beginning. It was pre-eminently a part of his temper to adhere to his own views. On a mind like his, broad and deep, but rooted like the oak to which he was compared, it is no reproach to say that the powerful and seemingly unanswerable expositions of Mr. Burke which changed the current of that critical time and saved England, had no influence whatever. Like Fox, like indeed the generality of statesmen, he wanted the higher and more comprehensive state-philosophy. It is one of the curious phenomena of history, how little of this higher wisdom enters into the councils of states, or actuates the conduct of statesmen. The power of arguing points—the comprehensive command and array of facts—the rapid perception of present realities and immediate consequences—and the ready penetration into the motives of opponent or ally; these enter into the combination of qualities which form the ordinary statesman. They are easily apprehended by the criticism of the vulgar, being but more powerful and efficient developments of the common sense of the multitude. Hence the general error of judgment with regard to what is called consistency; the apprehension of the crowd will cling to names and conventions when (looking to the actual constitution of things) their sense has virtually changed. And hence, also, in a still higher degree the risk he runs of being misunderstood, who looks at human events through the medium of principles, and consequently perceives and points out results which a more remote period yet hides from the narrowness of ordinary vision. Mr. Flood would have maintained the cause of reform in the midst of a growing confusion; and purified with fire when the conflagration was breaking out. It was no time to talk of reform in England when the principles of revolution were taking hold upon ignorance, and society was threatened by a force as gigantic as the folly by which it was actuated. Of course, under the circumstances, Mr. Flood's scheme was rejected; and this attempt may be considered as the close of his public career. He was excluded from the next parliament by the united efforts of both the great parties, and retired to Farmly suffering from a painful sense of undeserved slight. Mr. Flood's proud, ambitious, and resentful tone of mind, must have felt the mortification acutely. Added to this was the bodily suffering of a severe attack of gout. While labouring under this malady he ventured to expose himself imprudently on the occasion of a fire breaking out in his premises.



A cold, terminating in pleurisy, followed, and caused his death on the 2d of December 1791.

Mr. Flood, on the lowest impartial estimate, must be reckoned among the first men of his day. As an orator, inferior to few; as a political casuist, superior to most. His style firm, well arranged, simple and perspicuous; his method of reasoning always ingenious and full of art; frequently just, forcible, and satisfactory. His character was unfortunately deeply tinctured with vanity and self-importance; and as life advanced in the strife with party and individual, a large portion of acrimony appears to have gradually mingled in the mass. Mr. Flood endowed by his will a professorship of the Irish language in Trinity College, Dublin; his friend Colonel Vallancey being recommended as the first professor. He also established prizes for English composition, which have no doubt been of great service to the Irish university in cultivating that gift of utterance, without which the accumulation of knowledge is in vain, save for the pleasure of its individual possessor.

#### WALTER HUSSEY BURGH.

BORN A. D. 1743.—DIED A. D. 1783.

THIS brilliant lawyer and distinguished member of the Irish parliament held a high place among the band of true patriots and eloquent speakers who acknowledged Mr. Grattan as their chief. Less of the substance of his life than we would wish to recover for the reader has been preserved in contemporary records; indeed his memory only lives in the scattered notices to be met with in parliamentary reports and memoirs of men of his time, who were more fortunate (or unfortunate) in finding biographers. In the distance of time only the chief luminaries are visible of systems of public men that have passed away; while Charlemont and Flood and Grattan survive,—Burgh, Daly, Perry, and many others who held distinguished places in the world of that day, are almost forgotten; and must, we regret to say, owing to the scarcity of materials, receive but a slender, if any, notice in our pages. The truth is, however, the events which formed the principal incidents in their lives are embodied in the memoirs of the chief men; so that in writing the memoir of Charlemont or of Grattan we are telling impliedly the story of a multitude of others. The annals of a leader are the annals of his followers.

Walter Hussey, who assumed the name of Burgh, was highly distinguished in the university of Dublin, as well for his classical proficiency as for his poetic talent and cultivated taste; and shortly after his call to the bar (1768), was nominated by the Duke of Leinster to a borough at his disposal, and on his entrance to parliament took a conspicuous part in opposition to Lord Townshend's government. His style of speaking was at first over flowery, and too profuse in classical quotation: but we are told that every session refined away something of these superfluities (probably he began to forget his classics), and improved him into an elegant and interesting debater. His parliamentary and professional success kept pace; as a lawyer he enjoyed a high reputa-

tion, and in the same year in which Mr. Flood took office, he accepted the post of prime serjeant. The acceptance by a barrister of professional advancement and distinction could not be looked upon in the same light as the acceptance by a statesman of high political office under an adverse government; but nevertheless a man of Mr. Burgh's high principle soon found the impossibility of serving two masters,—the government and his country. Even during his continuance in the position of prime serjeant, he did not cease to act in concert with his party; on the introduction of the question of Irish trade in 1779, by Mr. Grattan's amendment to the address in answer to the Lord-lieutenant's speech, Mr. Burgh concluded a spirited debate by moving, instead of the amendment, "That it is not by temporary expedients, but by free trade alone, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin." Of course "free trade," as here used, meant the removal of restrictions and prohibitions on Irish exports, and not free trade in the full modern acceptation of the word. The amendment to the address, as first proposed by Grattan, had been drawn up by Daly, but some objections having arisen, they were concluded by Mr. Burgh's amendment. His conduct on this occasion was warmly approved by the constituency he represented,—the university of Dublin,—but of course put him in a painful position towards the government with which he was officially connected. Shortly after, in the same year, and while the Irish parliament was still held in irritating suspense on the subject of trade, a motion in committee of supply to limit the grant to six months was the occasion of a second collision with the government. Mr. Burgh made a speech which has been often commemorated by Irish writers both for its effects and for its intrinsic merits. This was the occasion on which he thought it necessary to resign his office. Shortly after, when Mr. Grattan was about to bring forward his motion on the independence of the Irish parliament, and requested Mr. Burgh's support, the latter replied, "I shall attend, and if it were my last vote I shall give it in favour of my country." It was known that the chancellorship was within his reach at the time, for the government was extremely desirous of recovering one who was escaped out of their net, and had been so valuable, though unmanageable, a capture; and when he had concluded his speech he turned to Mr. Grattan and said, "I have now sacrificed the greatest honour an Irishman can aim at." Notwithstanding his political offences, however, his character stood so high at the bar that it was impossible for the government to pass him over for professional advancement. He was raised to the bench as chief baron of the exchequer, in which high station he died in 1783, in the fortieth year of his age, leaving, in corrupt times, a blameless reputation. On the subject of his character some fine sayings of Flood, Grattan, and other eulogists, have become trite by frequent repetition. Mr. Flood said, "he did not live to be ennobled by patent,—he was ennobled by nature." Lord Temple, in writing on the event of his death, "No one had that steady weight which he possessed in the judgment and affections of his country; and no one had more decidedly that inflexible and constitutional integrity which the times and circumstances peculiarly call for." Burgh left his family in embarrassed circumstances. His infirmity was the love of



ostentatious display; his equipage was stately and expensive beyond his rank and means; six horses and three outriders would, in our times, expose a chief baron to the world's smile. Mr. Grattan proposed, and obtained from parliament, a grant for the relief of his family.

JOHN HELY HUTCHINSON.

BORN A.D. 1715.—DIED A.D. 1794.

THE subject of this memoir was the son of Mr. Francis Hely, but assumed the name of Hutchinson, on inheriting the property of his wife's relative, Richard Hutchinson of Knocklofty, in the county of Tipperary. He was called to the bar in 1748, and having rapidly distinguished himself as a lawyer, soon entered the House of Commons, then, as now, the sure avenue to promotion. There his legal and political knowledge and considerable oratorical powers made him a dangerous opponent to the government, which soon recognised the advisability of buying him over first by a silk gown, and then, in 1762, by the appointment of prime serjeant. Further advancement in his profession being inconsistent with continuing in parliament where the government could not afford to dispense with his services; in 1774 he retired from the bar and received the high appointment of provost of Trinity College, Dublin, vacant by the death of Provost Andrews. Such an appointment being not merely anomalous, but looking to the character and objects, to the constitution and dignity of the University of Dublin, bearing the character of a most unwarrantable stretch of power, must necessarily arrest the reader's attention. It demonstrates how much the government was in need of support against the growing power of the opposition when such an appointment could be extorted from it by a man of Mr. Hutchinson's useful but not extraordinary abilities. It also illustrates the contempt for Ireland which was so often indicated in the proceedings of the English officials of the castle. That which might have been done in England, under the Plantagenets and Tudors, was done in Ireland under the Georges. To the fellows, professors, and scholars of Trinity College, in that time eminent for even more than the reputation of learning and talent they have at all times deservedly enjoyed, such an outrage as making their provostship the reward of a political supporter who had no connexion with the university, could hardly have been offered by an administration which valued learning or regarded the true interests of the country. Ireland, then beginning to cry aloud for the privileges of national manhood, but yet whole generations away from moral and intellectual puberty, was overruled by expedients. Instead of fostering institutions and endeavouring to spread and cultivate the seeds of future civilization and prosperity, all was done with a view to the governmental exigencies of the moment and without a thought for the morrow. The resources that were spent in buying over or silencing the representative, might have won by liberal and just measures the support of the represented: the machinery of the clock might have been regulated with far less trouble than was continually bestowed upon adjusting the hands. To purchase votes

was the system of carrying on government ; and the policy with regard to the people was alternately ill-judged and worse timed concession, and then barbarian violence and coercion. There was none of that mild and kindly wisdom which looks to the real wants and actual interests, and anticipates the growth of a nation. To ward off rather than to provide for the political changes which were inevitable was the object of the British government. It never entered in their calculations that Ireland, though far behind England in the civilization of her people, yet comprised in her higher ranks a large and increasing nucleus of the very highest civilization, essentially English in its entire frame ; and that consequently, whether matured or not, she would not rest one step short of England in advantage or pretensions. The struggle for political equality once begun, would propagate an impulse to freedom through every rank of the people. To prepare them for the time when it would have been necessary to grant their demands and treat them no longer as a conquered nation, but as part of a great and free empire compacted with the rest by equal laws and kindly sympathies, needed but an early attention to the diffusion of the comforts, arts, and knowledge of civilized life. To maintain peace amid all the elements of disorder, and to keep up an intolerable and destructive fiscal pressure, were the main ends of British policy, and were accomplished by the most unblushing corruption and abuse of public patronage. But from the evils of government outside her walls the University of Dublin might well have congratulated herself upon a considerable immunity from the time when her buildings were converted into a barrack by Tyrconnel, to the rude and inconsiderate imposition of an extern provost.

It is hard to discuss an appointment which put Mr. Hutchinson in such a false position without doing him somewhat of injustice : for he was far from an illiterate person, or one who, if he had attained it fairly, would not have adorned the position. On the contrary, as an orator he was the rival of Flood, and in their frequent contests was generally considered to have the advantage ; he was specially distinguished for a peculiar command of style which enabled him to be concise or diffusive, perplexing or perspicuous, simple and plain spoken, or splendid and figurative as the occasion required. As a debater, he has been thus described by Secretary Hamilton, "he was the speaker who, in support of the government, had always something to say which gratified the house ;—he could go out in all weathers, and as a debater was therefore inestimable." Mr. Hutchinson always contrived to interest and retain the attention of parliament, and in every collision preserved his temper and conciliated his hearers by an appearance of respect. He was also a fine scholar and a lover of classical learning ; but with all this to recommend him for advancement in his own profession or in political life, he had an inordinate appetite for promotion, which marred his better qualities, made him a hired servant of the government and an object of ridicule even to those under whom he served. Among other instances, a story is told of his having made an application to Lord Townshend for some addition to the numerous appointments which he had contrived to sweep together in his own person. Townshend jestingly answered, that there was at the moment nothing vacant



but a majority of horse. To his surprise, however, Mr. Hutchinson immediately pressed for it. It may now be considered a matter of more legitimate wonder that it was granted, and that being himself unable to serve in that capacity, his valour was obliged to be represented by a deputy major. The incident was by no means new—nor are we quite sure that the following *mot* of Lord North's was altogether original, though it was highly appropriate to the individual. When Mr. Hutchinson appeared in the court of St. James's, the king asked who he was; Lord North answered, "That is your Majesty's principal secretary of state in the Irish establishment; a man on whom if your Majesty were pleased to bestow England and Ireland, he would ask for the Isle of Man for a potato garden." The spirit of exaction and concession received its most remarkable illustration in Mr. Hutchinson's appointment as provost; and the result was as vexatious to himself as it was derogatory to the university. Most painful proofs were given to the new provost that such an intrusion upon their learned guild could not be submitted to by the senior fellows or the general body of the university. Nevertheless Hutchinson's dexterity, supported by the power of the administration, served him in good stead, and he quickly contrived to make a diversion in his own favour. Unable to propitiate in any way the injured dignity of the fellows, he successfully appealed to the folly and vanity of the students. They were delighted with the prospect of converting a reverend seat of learning, science, and theology, into a seminary for the frivolities of fashionable society; a dancing school, a riding school, a gymnasium where young gentlemen might be accomplished for the ball room and the race course; where the sons of the nobility might acquire those rudiments which had been neglected in the stables at home, and where perhaps their daughters might hope to come in course of time for similar refinements. Such an innovation could not fail to win the approval of the freshmen—delighted to exchange the categories and predicaments for the five positions, and the moods and figures of Aristotle for the lighter figures of the reel and strathspey. The youthful fry were quickly arrayed on the side of the gay functionary who came thus attended with song and dance to banish the conventual gloom of philosophy and substitute

Jest and youthful jollity,  
Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,  
Nods and becks and wreathed smiles,

for the antiquated empire of classical learning and the frozen splendours of modern science. Such was the device of the lawyer and political partisan; he had read Sallust to some purpose, and knew the efficacy of promise on light and undisciplined minds. "*Sed maxime adolescentium familiaritates adpetebat; eorum animi molles et ætate fluxi dolis laud difficulter capiebantur. Nam uti cujusque studium ætate flagrabat, aliis scorta præbere; aliis canes atque equos mercari; postremo neque sumtui, neque modestiæ suæ parcere, dum illos obnoxios fidosque faceret.*"

So far as the new provost's methods of winning support were public, they were received with acclamation by the multitude, ever ready to rush headlong into specious projects, and credulous of the delusive

promises of charlatans. The journalists and little pamphleteers, then a most ignorant class, more subject to the influence of public prejudices than capable of correcting or dispelling them, and inflated with a low contempt for all knowledge beyond the journey work babble of the weekly press, fell into this popular and prosperous device, and helped to bring into favour the new provost and his enlightened scheme to improve upon the *humaniores literæ*. On the other hand, it may be supposed there were many who were keenly alive to the strange and grotesque indignity thus offered, not only to the university but also to Ireland, and indeed to learning and the learned. It was seen that the proposed innovations were unsuitable; that fashionable accomplishments could be acquired at home, at the grammar school or from extern professors, and that the student might receive the visits of the dancing master or the riding master, without the necessity of investing those dignified professors with cap and gown, and dubbing them doctors of dancing or prancing. But above all, the senior fellows, as became their dignity and station, exerted themselves to ward off a blow which would have gone far to obscure the light of the Irish seat of learning. Happily they resisted with effect; though indeed it is to be presumed that Hutchinson could never have seriously intended to carry out his fantastic proposal. Doctor Patrick Duigenan, a man of coarse taste, but exceedingly vigorous understanding, a lawyer also, and a senior fellow, took an active part in the controversy to which Provost Hutchinson's proposal gave rise. He published several satirical squibs in the *Hibernian Journal*; and, not content with writing, also assailed the innovator with rough and homely language, which was probably more true than courteous. On these assaults of the tongue it is said the provost looked down with that contempt which is available on any side of a cause, and the best weapon when the case affords no better. Some of his partisans, however, were less moderate, and the Doctor was in turn assailed with affronts and indignities, which he met and parried with a degree of humour and dexterity which must afford material for his own memoir. The Hutchinson project was allowed to fall into oblivion at last; and its author retained the provostship for life. The real talents and learning of a very able man gradually recommended him to the members of the university board; and having reached the highest position to which he could aspire, not being eligible for a bishopric, he rendered considerable assistance in the house of commons (in which he continued to sit as member for the city of Cork), to the patriotic policy he had supported in the commencement of his political career. It may be mentioned in his praise, that he took a prominent part in favour of the Octennial bill, the address in favour of free-trade, and the bill for the repeal of the penal laws affecting members of the church of Rome. He was offered a peerage, and accepted the honour for his family in the person of his wife, who was created baroness Donoughmore. His death occurred in 1794.



## BARRY YELVERTON, VISCOUNT AVONMORE.

BORN A. D. 1736.—DIED A. D. 1805.

It is interesting to know that last century, in a little village or "hedge" school in the county of Cork, two poor boys received their education who afterwards rose to the highest eminence at the bar. These schools, once so common in Ireland, and perhaps nowhere else, were conducted in rude hovels by men whose dress, manner, and diction were most extraordinary and uncouth; but who really imparted to their "poor scholars," themselves quite a caste in Ireland, a fair knowledge of classics and a considerable acquaintance with mathematics.\* They perhaps owed their existence to the latinity of the Catholic church, which recruited its priesthood chiefly among the peasantry; and they were often the means of stimulating native genius, and enabling a clever lad to mount the first steps. The picturesque diversity of light and darkness which they created in Ireland has long since been changed by the National system into an obscure diffusion of education—and as the struggle for existence becomes if anything harder, and therefore the possibility of leisure less, no more is likely to be attained by the working classes than "a little knowledge" widely diffused. But without laying ourselves open to the accusation of snapping at the wheels of progress, we may soberly doubt if such men as Barry Yelverton, Viscount Avonmore, and John Philpot Curran, Irish Master of the Rolls, would be so likely to find their way upward in the present diffused state of education, as when there was a better article, and considerably less of it. Yelverton preceded Curran by about twelve years in the village school of Newmarket—a smoky cabin where some score of rough-headed boys droned Virgil or Sallust; and, at an age which would now be considered extraordinarily early, he succeeded in obtaining one of the sizarships instituted for poor scholars in the university of Dublin. They were equivalent to the servitorships of Oxford, and were a real link between the university and the peasantry; but since the extinction of the hedge schools they have fallen into the hands of the middle classes, and have very properly been freed from their menial character. In Yelverton's time the sizars dined on the leavings of the pensioners, were appointed to sweep the halls, and perform many other menial duties, to which they were not unused in their own rank of life. The future chief baron was to be seen many a frosty morning busily plying his broom upon the steps, inwardly engaged with a Greek tragedy or preparing an oration for the debating club—lately founded by Mr. Edmund Burke—of which we learn from its record, recently brought to light by the Historical Society, he was a highly distinguished member. His next advance in life was to obtain the situation of usher in a classical school kept by a Mr. Buck, in North King street, Dublin. Mrs. Buck was an enlightened economist, and determined to effect a saving in her domestic expenditure by reducing the diet of the

\* The reader will find an amusing description of the hedge schools of Ireland in Carleton's *Traits and Stories of the Irish peasantry*.

ushers to bread and milk—the wholesome and substantial fare of school-boys in all generations. The lady's theory was accordingly put into actual operation; and Yelverton, who was head usher, feeling his pride nettled by a change no less ungrateful to his stomach than derogatory to his station, came to the resolution of seeking his fortune in a higher and more worthy field. Without delay he quitted the King street academy, and by strenuous exertions succeeded in being called to the bar in 1764. He was now unquestionably placed in his proper element; but, as commonly happens, continued for some years to walk the courts without making any progress in his profession; but he soon attracted that notice which talent never fails to receive in a circle so shrewd and observant as that of the Irish bar. Yelverton's great colloquial powers were sure to bring him forward, as nothing is so much appreciated in Ireland. It was a time when party feeling was just beginning to rise; such a man could not fail to be wanted in parliament; and accordingly, in 1774 he was elected to represent the city of Carrickfergus. His general character as an orator and politician is drawn by Barrington with considerable force and distinctness, and probably a fair amount of accuracy. He is described as inferior to Flood, Grattan, Burgh, and Curran, in their several descriptions of eloquence, but in the command of "powerful nervous language, superior to them all. A vigorous, commanding, undaunted eloquence burst in torrents from his lips." Mr. Barrington goes on to describe the moral features of his disposition; and, among other traits, mentions that "in the common transactions of the world he was an infant." It may be inferred from Mr. Barrington's description that he was a man of extreme simplicity and singleness of mind, with the virtues and failings not unusually attendant on such a character, and of warm passions and sensibilities which heightened and gave effect to such qualities. He was equally free from the disguises with which men hide the less comely parts of human nature, and the conventions of society which repress the nobler instincts. Such a man will often be found to err on both sides of the common track; now falling into strange and grotesque deviations, and now towering in the dignity of native goodness. "His character," says Barrington, "was entirely transparent—it had no opaque qualities—his passions were open—his prepossessions palpable—his failings obvious—and he took as little pains to conceal his faults as to publish his perfections." We may add the following account of his legal and judicial character from the same authority:—"Amply qualified for the bench by profound legal and constitutional learning—extensive professional practice—strong logical powers—a classical and wide-ranging capacity—equitable propensities and a philanthropic disposition—he possessed all the positive qualifications for a great judge." To counterbalance these characteristics we are told that "he received impressions too soon, and perhaps too strongly; he was indolent in research, and impatient in discussion." Our readers may remember a well-known instance in which Mr. Curran practised with amusing effect on this temper of mind.

From the foregoing description it will be understood that Mr. Yelverton was of necessity a great social power. We have already alluded to the "Monks of the Screw"—a political and convivial society in which that spirit first arose, and was kindled from mind to mind, which after-



wards gave new life to Ireland. The subject of our memoir was the founder of this body—and it shows how rapidly he must have made good his position, that in five years after his call to the bar he was able to draw about him all the wit and talent of the Dublin of that day. The place of meeting was in Kevin street; and, consisting chiefly of barristers and members of parliament, the monks were accustomed to meet in term time on Saturday evenings. In these meetings they seem to have kept up in some measure a travestied imitation of conventual formalities. The chapter at which the abbot presided, and at which the members wore black robes, was held before commons; a grave deportment gave poignancy to the sallies of not intemperate humour, for which it offered materials and a mask of decorum. Most of the political *brochures*, which in the great popular struggle that was then commencing had the most telling effect, were ascribed to the witty monks. Besides the founder, some of the most distinguished were Curran, Day—a senior fellow of Trinity college, Dublin,—Arthur Browne and Stack, who were also fellows, the Earl of Charlemont, Hussey Burgh, Corry, Daly, Judge Day, Charles Doyle, afterwards a major-general and baronet, whose cry of *Fag-a-bealach!* ("clear the way!") at the landing of Aboukir, became the motto of his regiment,—the Earl of Mornington, Henry Grattan, George Ogle, the author of that charming ballad "Molly astore"—Sir Michael Smith, Mr. Ponsonby,—Arthur Wolfe, afterwards Lord Kilwarden, all men of high repute in their generation. This society lasted till 1795, but as its members dropped off one by one, and only a few were left, melancholy took the place of mirth at its meetings.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Yelverton had an active and effectual part in the struggle for the commercial and legislative independence of his country. He had also the rare wisdom to see where to stop, and to mark the point where a popular revolution had gone to the utmost length to which its results could be salutary, and at which reaction or a dissolution of society would be the result of carrying it further—a wisdom more wanting in Ireland than elsewhere, as well from the moral constitution of the people as from the peculiar circumstances of the country. At a period when the volunteer movement had performed the function of an irregular remedy for a singular disease—and was becoming in itself a more dangerous disease than that which it had remedied, Mr. Yelverton was one of those truly consistent men whom the cant of party consistency did not prevent from resisting the arrogance of an unconstitutional faction. He saw the fetters that were being forged for the emancipated legislature; he was not deaf to the revolutionary maxims that were then beginning to breathe from rank to rank, and foreseeing what must be the result, he, following the lead of Henry Grattan, loved his country well enough to put himself under the accusation of forsaking her cause. In the administration of the Duke of Portland he took a frank and manly part in opposition to many dear friends with whom he had been accustomed to feel and act, and opposed the violent proceedings of the convention of delegates. In 1782 he had been appointed attorney general, his promotion being solely due to his place and reputation at the bar, and not to his having as yet withdrawn his support from the party which was upholding

the interests of Ireland. Of course the opinion, and in some measure the conduct, of a sound constitutional lawyer were to be calculated on; but there was at the moment a disposition on the part of the government, having made such considerable concessions as were calculated to satisfy any honest patriot, to reap where it had sown, and obtain the assistance of the moderate members of the popular party. It was as attorney-general that Mr. Yelverton was called on to take the lead in that stand made by the commons on November 29th, 1783 (the year after his appointment), against Mr Flood's motion for leave to bring in a bill of parliamentary reform. We have already related the circumstances, and quoted an extract from Mr. Yelverton's speech upon that occasion.\* The able and spirited resistance of the attorney-general had the more weight from his long support of the popular party, and decided the fate of motion. The ground of his opposition was that it was the dictate of an armed body. After some expressions of praise due to the former merits of the volunteers, he added with considerable force, "but when they turn aside from this honourable conduct,—when they form themselves into a debating society, and with that rude instrument the bayonet, probe and explore a constitution which it requires the nicest hand to touch, I own my respect and veneration for them is destroyed. If it will be avowed that this bill originated with them, I will reject it at once, because I consider that it decides the question whether this house or the convention are the representatives of the people, and whether this house or the volunteers are to be obeyed." His services on this occasion conscientiously rendered were no doubt deserving of recognition; and the position of attorney-general, then as now, was necessarily the step to higher honour. In 1784 he was nominated to the privy council and raised to the bench as Chief Baron; and in 1795 to the peerage by the title of baron Yelverton of Avonmore. His politics had led to some alienation from old friends, and his judicial duties now to a great degree withdrew him from politics, and lessened the opportunities for renewing friendly relations. Mr. Curran was one of those old companions from whom he was thus alienated. In a trial on which Lord Avonmore sat as judge, Mr. Curran was one of the counsel for the defendant, and took occasion to appeal to the sensibility of his old friend, in the following allusion to the meetings of the club:—"this soothing hope I draw from the dearest and tenderest recollections of my life—from the remembrance of those attic heights and those refectations of the gods, which we have spent with those admired, and respected and beloved companions who have gone before us; over whose ashes the most precious tears of Ireland have been shed." Here Lord Avonmore could not refrain from bursting into tears. "Yes, my good lord, I see you do not forget them. I see their sacred forms passing in sad review before your memory. I see your pained and softened fancy recalling those happy meetings, where the innocent enjoyment of social mirth became expanded into the nobler warmth of social virtue, and the horizon of the board became enlarged into the horizon of man—where the swelling heart communicated the pure and generous purpose—where my slenderer and younger taper

\* Life of Lord Charlemont, p. 163.



imbibed its borrowed light from the more matured and redundant fountain of yours. Yes, my lord, we can remember those nights without any other regret than that they can never more return for

“ We spent them not in toys or lust or wine,  
But search of deep philosophy,  
Wit, eloquence, and poesy:  
Arts, which I loved; for they, my friend, were thine.”

The sequel of this incident is truly and affectingly characteristic. The two poor boys of Newmarket village school, one now chief baron of the exchequer, the other first advocate and orator of the Irish bar, were thus reconciled to each other. The “moment the court rose, his lordship sent for his friend, and threw himself into his arms, declaring that unworthy artifices had been used to separate them, and that they should never succeed in future.”\* Lord Avonmore, as we have said, in his later years took little part in politics; he opposed the government on the regency question, but was, we are sure, from conscientious convictions—indeed his high station put him beyond the imputation of baser motives—in favour of the legislative union. In December 1800 he was advanced to the rank of viscount in the Irish peerage—an advance which, while it cannot for an instant be supposed to have been accepted as a bribe, as many similar honours were at this period, was undoubtedly bestowed in recognition of political support. Lord Avonmore, after a long and honourable life,—from the peasant to the peer,—expired in the autumn of 1805 in his sixty-seventh year.

#### SIR BOYLE ROCHE, BARONET.

BORN A.D. 1743.—DIED A.D. 1807.

FEW men of his day are more frequently named by contemporary writers than Sir Boyle, owing to the singular position he held in social and political life. In public affairs he played the comic part with considerable success; and his memory is interesting for the stray gleam which it reflects of the social characteristics of his times. Born of a respectable family—a junior branch of the Fermoy—he obtained a commission in the army and served in the American war. He was fortunate enough, on retiring from the service, to obtain a seat in the Irish house of Commons, and enlisted from the commencement in the ranks of the Treasury bench. Sir Boyle was as little likely as any Irishman to hide his light or to remain in obscurity from excess of modest reserve; and his usefulness was soon acknowledged by the bestowal of a pension and the appointment of master of the ceremonies in the Viceregal Court. For this position he was eminently qualified by his handsome figure, graceful address, and ready wit—qualities which were set off by a frank, open, and manly disposition, not always the ornament of that gaudy and perfumed station. The stilts of formality and stays of fashion were needless in the wardrobe of the true Irish

\* Life of J. P. Curran, by his son, W. H. Curran.

gentleman of the old school; and the English functionaries who came over prejudiced against the manners of the Irish, and at the same time curious about the social powers and failings, the wit and blunders of which they had heard so much, found themselves agreeably enlightened by the fortunate combination of polished manners with the most native humour and spirit which met them on their first introduction to the Castle, in the person of Sir Boyle Roche. His qualifications, however, were soon to find a wider field of display, and a more important if not more dignified office. The taste for fun and humour pervaded all classes in Ireland to an extreme degree; and whether the notion was suggested by the effect of some parliamentary blunder of more than usual felicity, or was the pure suggestion of administrative wisdom, it is certain that Sir Boyle's amusing gifts were systematically made use of by several ministers; and whenever it was necessary to cool the heat of debate, to meet with ridicule arguments which could not be answered, or to break the force of plain statement by the brawn shield of burlesque, the rich mellow brogue of the parliamentary jester was heard above the uproar of debate. A happy knack of twisting facts or ideas into some unexpected form of comicality, enabled him to give that turn to excited passion which deprives the orator of the better part of his power, and compels the accumulated indignation or obstinacy of a popular assembly to evaporate into a harmless laugh. Endowed in a very high degree with this useful qualification, it is easy to see how effectually he might be sometimes called up to uncharm away the effect of a kindling address from Grattan, or to retort the delicate and classic wit of Curran by a whole drove of rampant comicalities of Munster. There is undoubted evidence that Sir Boyle was designedly used for this purpose by the Irish government. His own odd style, it was frequently observed, was set off by marks of graver and more elaborate consideration than could be easily reconciled with the general opinion entertained of his habits and character of mind; but it was not generally known that it was usual for members of the cabinet to write speeches for him which he committed to memory, and, while mastering the substance, generally contrived to travesty into language and ornament with peculiar graces of his own. On many of these occasions he was primed and loaded for action by the industry of Mr. Edward Cooke, who acted, during several administrations as muster-master to the wisdom of the Castle. But still his best and most distinguishing efforts were made on those occasions when he was carried forward by the felicity of his own genius. Of the many curious anecdotes which are related of him in parliament we can only notice two as specimens of his humour. Mr. Sergeant Stanley, who had taken unusual pains in preparing a speech of considerable force and effect, and to make sure of success, had committed his well conned oration to paper, happened to sit near Sir Boyle in the coffee-room of the House, studying his speech. Suddenly the person who had been speaking ended, and Mr. Stanley rushed out to seize the next opening; in his hurry he let the composition drop upon the floor without perceiving it. Sir Boyle picked it up, and, reading it over, was thoroughly master of its contents. He returned to the House where Mr. Stanley continued watching for his opportunity. Sir Boyle and he rose to speak together, when the general cry of the House decided for



the wit and humorist. Sir Boyle at once gravely delivered the whole oration, word for word, to the astonishment and dismay of the enraged author, who rose and walked into the coffee-room. When Sir Boyle had made an end, he followed and thus addressed the subject of his exploit:—"My dear Stanley, here is your speech again, and I thank you kindly for the loan of it. I never was so much at a loss for a speech in the whole course of my life: and, sure, it is not a pin the worse for the wear, and now you may go in and speak it again yourself as soon as you please." On another occasion the table was loaded with an enormous pile of papers, which had been accumulated by the successive demands of one of the opposition members, with a view to illustrate some motion. When this motion was about to be proposed, it was moved as a necessary preliminary, that the clerk should first read to the House the documentary mass on the table. The proposition was received with general consternation, as the reading could not be completed in less than two hours. A loud murmur arose through the benches on all sides of the House; on which Sir Boyle gravely rose and moved that a dozen or two of the committee clerks should be called in and have the documents distributed among them, when, by reading all together, the whole might be done in a quarter of an hour. A loud laugh dissolved the cloud of impatience, and the question was postponed to enable the mover to make some more convenient arrangement. It may be conceived that in the stormy crisis of 1782 Sir Boyle Roche was of considerable service to the administration, and it was in that year that he received his baronetcy. He continued for many years to take a conspicuous, though, of course, practically unimportant, part in politics. He died in Dublin in June 1807, regretted by a large and respectable circle of friends, whom his amiability and many attractive social qualities had greatly attached to him.

#### EDMUND BURKE.

BORN A.D. 1728.—DIED A.D. 1797.

THERE is no name of which Irishmen may so justly feel proud as of that which stands at the head of this memoir. Although England was the scene of the greater part of Mr. Burke's career, and that part of it which falls within the local history of Ireland would not entitle him to notice in historical biography, yet he preserved his nationality to the end so openly and unmistakably, that, even when entirely engrossed with imperial concerns, he never seems to lose his claim on the Irish biographer. We see the fact of his being an Irishman impeding his progress; we see him bearing his country's reproach, but never denying his extraction—more than can be said for some other illustrious men of Irish birth. This gives him a strong claim to be respectfully remembered by his countrymen, whose reputation for eloquence and genius no man has done more to advance. It is needless to endeavour to trace Mr. Burke's pedigree; it may well be that he had no ancestor so illustrious as himself; but that he belonged to that high-priesthood of genius which has neither beginning nor end of days, which derives none

of its lustre from ancestors, and seldom transmits it to descendants. His father—for we need go back no further—was an attorney in good practice on Arran Quay, Dublin, and his mother a Miss Nagle, of Mallow, in the county of Cork. Mrs. Burke was a Roman Catholic, and her only daughter, Juliana, was brought up in that faith; while the boys, following their father, were brought up as members of the Church of England; but we may be sure that the circumstance of Edmund's mixed parentage had a fortunate influence on his education, and prevented his imbibing that extravagant hatred of Romanism which has been so very injurious to Ireland, making its Protestantism so ultra-Protestant, and its Romanism so ultramontane. Bigotry has had a stunting and mischievous effect on the intellectual development of the nation; for no man, however great his intellect, can fail to suffer in all his judgments, from being insane on any one point. It so happened that Mr. Burke spent the greater part of his childhood with Roman Catholic relations, and it is rather a matter for surprise that no effort seems to have been made to influence his mind on religious matters. The intolerable odours of the Liffey, which have often driven the judges from their courts, made the air of Arran Quay disagree with the young statesman's health, and he was, in consequence, sent to his mother's relatives in the county of Cork, and spent some happy years between the farms of his grandfather and uncles. In this neighbourhood Spenser wrote his "Fairy Queen;" not far off was the grass-grown ruin of Kilmolman castle, where his child was burned; and the romantic reaches of the Blackwater, were, to the boy's imagination, still haunted by the poet's spirit. In the village school, presided over by a schoolmaster named O'Halloran, he received his first instructions in the Latin tongue; and when, as a great man, he afterwards visited the home of his childhood, there was a touching meeting between the statesman and his first preceptor; and the old man who came to see Burke at Coolbawn went away glowing with pride and pleasure at his affectionate reception, and with as many guineas as his old pupil could spare. In the year 1771, Edmund Burke was sent to the famous school of Ballitore, then conducted by Abraham Shackleton, as for three generations it was successfully conducted by his descendants. Mr. Shackleton, himself a Quaker, had been invited over from Yorkshire by the Society of Friends to assume the management of their school in the county of Kildare; conducted on the principles of that society, it was distinguished by a gentle and elevated moral tone, very unusual in those days. Quakerism is peculiarly tolerant and broad-minded, and has always judged the Roman Catholic Church with more fairness and charity than have been manifested towards her by any other Protestant sect; and Mr. Burke in this respect, as in others, received the Quaker stamp of character. With Richard Shackleton, the principal's son, he formed such a friendship as can only be formed in early boyhood; and which, when their positions and careers lay far apart, and their common interests narrowed, never lost anything of its tenderness. Mr. Shackleton noticed in his son's little friend an aptitude of understanding, which made him bestow much pains on his education; and although Richard Burke, his younger brother who accompanied him to school, was considered by many a brighter and more promising boy, the master formed a different and



juster estimate. Edmund was still sickly, of a dreamy and speculative disposition, shy to strangers, seldom joining in the games of the boys, and never so happy as when alone with his book. But while he held aloof from their out-door amusements, his conversational powers made him extremely popular with his schoolfellows, and in the boy parliament he was an illustrious speaker. The copiousness of his language was equalled by the abundance of his ideas, in the arrangement of which he possessed an intuitive tact.

In 1743, having spent two years at Ballitore, he entered Trinity college, Dublin, under the tuition of Dr. Pellisier. Here he seems to have been, as he was at school, a dreamer of dreams, given, as we learn from his correspondence with Richard Shackleton, to solitary rambles and meditation, moved to great yearning by sunrises and sunsets, moderately attentive to collegiate studies, and moderately successful in competition for prizes. He obtained the classical scholarship in due course; but the dons, as usual, were quite unconscious that a genius of the first magnitude was passing through their field of vision. Burke was a statesman even at school, while successful collegians must be schoolboys at college. He was soaring far away in distant and irrelevant fields of thought and study, strengthening himself on food that his preceptors knew not of, while he should have been taking in that dry and unvarying store which is appointed for students of all generations. In the young men by whom he was surrounded there was little to emulate; and a sense of complete superiority left no room for ambition.

He seems to have been subject to intellectual crazes or enthusiasms; at one time for mathematics, at another for history; again for logic and metaphysics, then for poetry; and these possessions drew him through painful courses of thought and reading, in which his whole heart and soul were engaged, and he came out of them with a great augmentation of thought, material, and general culture. Metaphysics seem to have specially occupied his attention—he studied the works of Hume and Berkeley with much interest. His own first literary essay was in this direction, but he was, happily, not seduced very far into a path so unprofitable and barren of results. Burke's mind was not one that could take in without giving out. We have already noticed his extraordinary power in conversation, in which he ranged far above and around the minds of his associates, astonishing them by his brilliancy and fertility. His spirit moved at ease under armour which might encumber less massive powers. Social in his temper and affections, he was no less himself in the lighter play of human intercourse. Ever cheerful, kindly, and full of the happiest spirits, playful from the activity of his mind, gentle and courteous from the absence of all sense of emulation, he accommodated himself to the understandings of his company and to the temper of the hour. His fund of anecdote was inexhaustible, but not fatiguing; his narrative graceful, easy, and pointed; his wit so much in keeping with the occasion, that it was rather felt than distinctly noted: it was the brilliant and tinted ripple on the perpetual stream. With such rare and singular attractions, his company was acceptable in every circle, and he rose almost at once to a distinction beyond his years and station in society. The same qualifications of address and conversa-

tion which drew from Dr. Johnson the well-known remark,\* that "if Burke were to go into a stable to give directions about his horse, the hostler would say, 'We have had an extraordinary man here,'" was often exemplified in the incidents recorded by his biographers. Poetry was another channel in which the outward stream of thought flowed in Mr Burke's college days, but fortunately this, too, passed away like his metaphysical craze, after affording a harmless outlet for the youthful activity and aspirations of his mind. Probably he possessed too much solid material, and too little sentiment, to have made a high-class poet; nevertheless his verses, written in the style of a school that is now classical, but has ceased to be popular, had, as might be expected in anything from the pen of Burke, considerable merit. The great orator frequently begins by attempting to be a poet; the geniuses of the two, while essentially different, are superficially so like, that there is much excuse to be made for the error, particularly in one who has never had opportunity of finding out his real excellence. This opportunity soon came to Burke. In 1747 he assisted in founding the debating society of Trinity college, which, under the title of the College Historical Society, exists to the present day in full vigour. From a manuscript book of transactions, chiefly in Burke's handwriting, the following interesting details were collected by a late auditor\* of the Society:—"The first meeting of the club took place in George's Lane on the 21st of April 1747; it met on Tuesdays and Fridays. On Tuesday an oration was spoken upon some given subject; on Friday a speech was spoken off, with proper emphasis and action, and a written paper was given in on a given topic on morality. . . . The speeches were written and then delivered from memory; and it was not an uncommon event to see such an entry as this—'Mr. Ardesoif had not his speech off by heart; his paper on Drunkenness was returned to him to correct, and he was ordered on next Friday to produce one on Love.'"

Edmund Burke was the life and soul of this Society; he seems to have been made censor, treasurer, and secretary, all in one. The young statesman in that small community exhibited that control over his fellow-creatures, and that affluence of imagination which afterwards marked his career in the English House of Commons. He spoke frequently in such assumed characters as these—Of Brutus, on the death of Lucretia; of a Roman senator against Cæsar at the time he went to command in Gaul; and of Ulysses on his embassy with Menelaus to recover Helen. His speech on this last occasion is entered on the minutes, and is very different from those which we are accustomed to hear now, and would no doubt be regarded as rather childish. He thus addresses the members:—"Witness, O Jove, who inhabit Ida, how I blush for Paris, for Priam, and for Troy. Laomedon once brought destruction on this city. Let his example warn you, Priam, lest it suffer the same fate under you. I am no Greek; I come not to avenge any injury I have received. No; I was led here by my desire for Menelaus, and my regard for justice, and to seek the reparation of his injuries.

\* The Rev. Robert Walsh's Opening Address, 1864. The transactions alluded to were in the possession of Judge Berwick, whose intention it was to leave them to the College Historical Society; but at his death they passed into his executor's hands.



How do you hope for the favour of the gods if you do not surrender Paris, that ravisher?" &c.

But if the future statesman's wonderful powers were first developed here, so also, curious to say, were his defects. That blemish which followed him through life, and marred the effect of some of his greatest speeches, is recorded on the minutes of this club; for we read on the 28th of April 1747, "Mr. Burke, for an essay on the Genoese, was given thanks for the matter, but not for the delivery." In the mimic warfare of this Society the young statesman learned to use the mighty weapon of speech with which he was girded by nature. Nor was his pen idle. There is good reason to suppose that he was the author of several essays in imitation, as it was generally believed, of the style of Dr. Lucas, and pushing his principles to their extreme consequences. There is a great presumption in favour of supposing that this was the intent of the essays, and that Burke was really their author, when we recollect that he was undoubtedly the imitator of Bolingbroke a few years later—thus justifying the suspicion in the former instance so generally entertained.\* These essays were such good copies of the doctor's style, and the *ad absurdum* application of principles was done with such clever plausibility, that for several weeks they were perused with unsuspicious gravity before the Irish public began to laugh at the deception which had been practised upon it.

Having completed his undergraduate course, and taken his degree of Bachelor of Arts at the spring commencements, February 1748,\* Mr. Burke, who had entered his name at the Middle Temple in the previous year, proceeded to London to keep his terms. Did our space permit, it would be interesting to record the future statesman's first impressions of the House of Commons, listening, from the place appropriated to strangers, to those with whom he was at no distant time to contend, almost unaided, a very Samson of debate. His first visit to Westminster Abbey, also, moved him deeply. Some fragments of correspondence of this date, preserved by his biographers, show that the great associations and large atmosphere of London had a powerful influence in developing his mind. Nevertheless, several years of desultory life followed—years in which he tasted the pleasures of a virtuous Bohemianism—not very strong in health, and extremely low in purse—recruiting the latter but slenderly by literary pursuits—gaining little law, but many friends among law-students, and alienating his father's affections and supplies of money by his want of steady application to legal studies. It was, indeed, irritating to the good attorney, who so well knew his son's great abilities, to see him turning them to no practical account, and drifting away with such a fine cargo from the very mouth of the haven for which he was destined. No doubt Mr. Burke would have made a great lawyer, but that was not his ambition—most inexplicable to an attorney! His philosophic temper was dissatisfied with the narrow, and, in some degree, fictitious range of an artificial science; he considered that it closed and

\* Mr. M'Knight (Life of Burke, p. 35) seems to imply that Burke wrote the essays in good faith, without any design of imitating Dr. Lucas, about whose plain, straightforward style, he thinks there was nothing to imitate. This is more flattering to Lucas than to Burke. We cannot agree with it.

† In 1751 he proceeded to the degree of M.A.

narrowed the mind, and he could not relinquish the clear and broad horizon of history, politics, and speculation, for the bounded compass of the special pleader's desk. Mr. Burke was not a man whom chains suited, even though the chains were golden; accordingly, he remained free, waiting for his vocation. It is said that at this time, while thus unattached, he became a candidate for the professorship of Logic in the University of Glasgow, and that a Mr. James Clow was preferred by the electors; but this story, which rests on the authority of Mr. Taylor, at a later period principal of the university, is improbable in the highest degree. There is nothing to justify it in the works or correspondence of Burke; he had done nothing at the time to entitle him to become a candidate; and, in any case, he could not have entertained a notion so very wild as that an Irishman would be appointed to a chair of logic in Scotland, the most logical of countries. Adam Smith, by whom the chair was vacated, and who supported the candidature of David Hume, entirely disbelieved the story; and, in a conversation with Dugald Stewart, attributed its origin to an observation of his own on the subsequent appearance of the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*—that if the writer of the essay would accept a chair in their university, he would be a valuable acquisition. As yet Mr. Burke was nameless—engaged in various and extensive reading, and in the projection of several literary works. He was in the habit of frequenting the Grecian Coffee-house, Devereux Street, Strand, and there his brilliant conversation obtained for him many acquaintances, and opened the way to a number of pleasant intimacies. At the London theatres he was a frequent visitor, and his acquaintance with Murphy the actor introduced him to Garrick, Macklin, and other chief performers. Macklin had set up a debating society (the British Inquisition), at which Burke may probably have exercised his oratorical gifts; and there is reason to suppose that he was a speaker at the Robin Hood Society, which was presided over by an eloquent baker, who kept a sort of school of rhetoric for young Templars and members of parliament. As the remittances from home diminished, Burke had to hunt more sedulously for a livelihood with his pen. His father, who was a man of violent temper, finding that he let term after term pass without being called to the bar, took this inconvenient way of expressing his disgust. He said to Joseph Emin, whom he met in St. James's Park, and assisted through the darkest and lowest pass of his wonderful life, in offering him half a guinea, that he too, like the young Armenian, was a runaway son. There is reason to think that he was greatly straitened in means, notwithstanding the great success that attended his literary adventures. He wrote for the periodicals of the day; but the first of his essays which has become distinctly known to the public was his *Vindication of the Laws of Natural Society*, published in 1756, two years after the publication of Bolingbroke's posthumous works. The imitation of this author's style (*Letters on the Study of History* being especially copied) was so well done, that Mr. Mallet, the editor of Bolingbroke's works, considered it necessary to make a formal declaration that the essay was not from his lordship's pen. In this essay Burke traces all the ills of mankind to the artificiality of the social structure; and the happy adaptation to his purpose of the style and manner of the splendid charlatan, and the sagacity with



which in a narrow compass he selected all the most effective considerations, have been the admiration of his critics. But it has been observed, not without reason, that he furnished the armoury of his opponents, the infidels and extreme democrats of the age; and that Godwin and Paine drew their main arguments from his powerful ironies. Irony is a dangerous weapon in defence of religious truth. Although the *Vindication* attracted considerable notice, it was by the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* that Burke was first raised to decided fame. Its publication was attended by unbounded applause, and elicited from all sides most gratifying tributes of admiration. Johnson gave it the warmest praise; and Burke's father, who could appreciate success, though not the sublime and beautiful, marked his approbation by a remittance of £100, which, together with the sale of the volume, enabled the author to extricate himself from pecuniary embarrassments.

In the "Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," to the second edition of which Burke prefixed a preface and a brief discourse on Taste, he bases the sublime on fear, the beautiful on love. The feeling of the sublime arises from a giddiness, or a distaste intensified to horror, &c. Beauty consists of positive qualities acting on the mind mechanically through the senses. On the merits of the essay we cannot enter here; it has long ago experienced the sifting to which such writings are destined; the theories have been rejected—the eloquent descriptions and discriminating observations retained. Its publication was a turning-point in Burke's life. His acquaintance was widely sought for, and he became the most distinguished figure in the circle which Boswell has so obsequiously drawn. The sagacious penetration of Johnson was in nothing more displayed than in his prompt and true estimation of Burke, and the depth of the impression is shown by the frequent repetition of the remark of Burke's superiority to all others—that he was the "first everywhere;" that "if you were driven by a shower of rain to take shelter under the same gateway with him, you must in a few minutes perceive his superiority over common men." Nor was there any occasion in his life in which the mention of Burke did not draw some comment to the same effect from the social autocrat who recognised no other rival in conversational ability.

Some time previously to this success Burke had married. An attack of debility, consequent on over-exertion in reading and writing, was the means of introducing him to his wife. He applied for advice to Dr. Nugent, a Roman Catholic physician of eminence; and the doctor, who was a man of culture and scholarship, was so won by the captivating address of Burke, that he invited him to remain under his care in his own family. An attachment soon sprang up between Miss Nugent and her father's interesting patient, which resulted in a most happy marriage. Mrs. Burke conformed to the Church of England, and this does not seem to have caused any estrangement with her own family. Notwithstanding the literary reputation which Burke had already attained, the penuriousness of his father, who out of a very large income allowed him but £200 a year, and the still greater penuriousness of publishers, again reduced him to such pecuniary embarrassment, that he began to think of emigrating to America, and would

probably have carried out the idea but for the substantial assistance given him by his father-in-law, who was entirely opposed to the scheme. It had probably originated in the interest which the compilation of a work on the European settlements in America had led him to take in the colonies. He had a hope of being able to obtain colonial employment from the government, but being dissuaded from applying for this, he turned his thoughts to the diplomatic service, and in February 1759 tried for the appointment of consul at Madrid, but was unsuccessful in his application. In the same year he commenced the *Annual Register*, for the editing and historical writing of which he received but £100 a year. The first volume contained a complete account from his pen of the Seven Years' War to the end of 1758. It was at this time that he was introduced by the Earl of Charlemont to Mr. William Gerard Hamilton, whom for two years he supplied with ideas; and at last, in 1761, when Mr. Hamilton was going over to Ireland under Lord Halifax, Burke was appointed his private secretary. In this position he was able to make himself of immense use, not only to his immediate employer, but to render important assistance to the government in public affairs. It is stated by Prior that he was employed as Hamilton's deputy in the management of the House of Commons. His ready and eloquent pen, and his singular power of digesting and arranging documents, were probably called into laborious requisition. Mr. Hamilton kept a giant, and he made him work. We cannot help thinking that the Chief Secretary's great speech in favour of allowing the Portuguese government to raise Irish Catholic regiments—the Catholics not being allowed to serve in the British army—was the composition of Burke. It is true that the famous oration from which Hamilton derived his nickname of "Single-Speech," was made in 1755 in the English house in support of Fox and Newcastle, and long before his acquaintance with Burke; and he made a second essay, which was, however, less successful. But his general ability was evidently much below the level of his English speeches, and the soubriquet bestowed upon him rather implied surprise at his making a great speech, than at his not repeating the performance. The high possibility that his English oration was prepared for him by some non-parliamentary genius, does not preclude the likelihood that his great orations, of which he spoke five in the Irish house—the best being the speech we have alluded to on the Portuguese regiments, which is so often confounded with his great English speech—were written by Burke, and delivered by Hamilton. The latter was known to learn off his speeches from paper, and the former was at his elbow, as his private secretary, with an inexhaustible store of argument and eloquence. Combining this with facts that Hamilton was extremely mean and devoid of principle, and that when Burke left him he made no more great speeches, but shrunk into his natural dimensions of insignificance, and that he exhibited the most extraordinary anxiety to retain Burke's services—in fact, the anxiety of a man to keep his brains rather than to retain a private secretary—and that Burke's style is strongly apparent in Hamilton's remains, we have the raw materials for a strong opinion on the subject. It is probable, on the whole, that the duties of private secretary were extremely disagreeable to a man of high honour; managing the house, as it was then managed, was not an edi-



fying employment; raising a third-rate man to the position of a great orator by the loan of his abilities was mortifying; and the treatment of the Roman Catholics, which he had not power to improve, was, he considered, during the whole period of his engagement, savage. There is no doubt that in all the principal measures of the administration he had an important share; but though he in this way derived both reputation and experience, the policy of government was not such as a patriotic Irishman could approve; and the miserable pension of £300 a year, procured for him with apparent difficulty through Primate Stone and others, was a poor recompense for the painfulness of such a position. That Burke's labours in Ireland were not inconsistent with his reputation, may be inferred from his enjoying the intimate friendship of such men as Langrishe, Monck Mason, and Lord Pery; but still we cannot help feeling that while he retained his pension, he was in a galling bondage. This pension was on the Irish establishment, and during pleasure; it was regarded by Mr. Burke as the well-earned reward of his public services, though it is evident that Mr. Hamilton saw, or pretended to see, the matter in a very different light. As this transaction has been misrepresented, we must enter on an explanation; although now, when the malice of enmity or faction has long passed away, and his memory stands out lofty and clear, a very brief notice of the transaction will suffice. The facts are these:—Being little the better off for his father's death, which occurred about this time, and his means being straitened (he was now the father of two children), he stipulated, in taking the pension, that he should not be debarred from following out his literary plans. On Hamilton's dismissal by the Duke of Northumberland, Burke accompanied him back to England in the same capacity as before; but Hamilton, fearing that he might be deprived of his services by some one else, proposed to make him an allowance from his own income in addition to his pension, and to have him as a sort of domestic mentor, binding him down to take no other employment. On Burke's refusing to make such a bargain, the quarrel arose. He was represented as wishing to appropriate a pension which had been obtained for him in recompense for services which he now refused to perform. It so happened that Hamilton had in reality little share in obtaining the pension, as was afterwards ascertained; but to avoid any imputation, he offered to hand it over to Hamilton, to whom it continued to be paid for some time after Burke had relinquished it. These facts were ascertained from a letter found among the papers of Flood, in which the whole story was strongly and bitterly stated. In this letter Burke said that, on the score of long and intimate friendship, he had continued with a kind of desperate fidelity to adhere to Hamilton's cause and person, though to himself he had fulfilled none of his engagements; "and his conduct on public affairs has been for a long time," he adds, "directly contrary to my opinions, very reproachful to himself, and disgusting to me." He calls the proposed compact "an insolent and intolerable demand, amounting to no less than a claim of servitude during the whole course of my life, without leaving me at any time a power either of getting forward with honour, or of retiring with tranquillity."

Mr. Hamilton, with a meanness scarcely credible, received and applied

to his own use the pension which had been granted to his former secretary by the Irish government, and which certainly, if continued at all, was not continued for the purpose of paying a retired minister's private secretary, still less of going into that minister's own pocket. Fortunately Mr. Burke, by the death of his elder brother Garret, had succeeded to a property worth £6000, and did not therefore feel the loss of his pension so severely as he would otherwise have done. Indeed, we find him at this time doing what was always his greatest pleasure—assisting genius in its early struggles—helping to send his friend Barry to study art in France and Italy, besides enlisting in his behalf more powerful patrons.

Mr. Burke had now gained official experience, and of a kind better than that of a born leader—the experience of a man risen from the political ranks, and who had acquired a complete mastery not only of the great principles, but of the details of public questions. His reputation had preceded him to London, and he was soon given an opportunity of exercising his political talents, not only on the side of his convictions, but where, owing to the weakness of his party, they were sure to be most conspicuous. Lord Rockingham's Whig ministry had just been formed on the dismissal of Grenville. Never was there a weaker combination in everything except political integrity. Chatham and his party were determined to show the country that it could not do without them. The gods had declined to govern, and the task had to be undertaken by the *dii minores*. Grafton led in the Lords, Conway in the Commons. Altogether the situation afforded a great opportunity for unknown talent. It was a few days after the ministry came into power (1765) that Mr. Fitzherbert, a member of the Board of Trade, introduced Burke to the Marquis of Rockingham, who immediately appointed him his private secretary. His relative, William Burke, who stood in the same relation to General Conway, probably exercised some influence in obtaining for him this important situation. An absurd incident, however, nearly frustrated this brilliant good fortune. The half-doting Duke of Newcastle was caught hold of by one of Hamilton's friends, who represented the new private secretary of the premier as not only an Irishman, which was a circumstance of suspicion, but as one who had been educated at St. Omer's—a Papist, Jacobite, and Jesuit. Full of this dreadful report, the duke communicated his fears to the marquis, who fortunately took the honourable and open course of informing Burke himself of this communication. It is needless to say that Burke easily satisfied him of the absurdity and groundlessness of such suspicions. The marquis was perfectly satisfied; but the proud and sensitive feelings of his secretary were deeply wounded by imputations of the kind being so lightly taken up by his chief; and he, in consequence, in a letter to the marquis, declined to continue the connexion. "Your lordship," he said, "may tell me that you disbelieve these reports now, but a rankling of doubt must unconsciously remain in your mind, which at a future day will have some influence on your conduct towards me; and no consideration can induce me to stand in such relationship with any one whose complete confidence I do not possess." The marquis, struck by his punctilious pride, and really desirous of retaining the services of such a man, assured Mr. Burke



that, so far from any injurious impression being left on his mind, he felt the highest respect and esteem for his character and conduct, and should always treat him with the most entire confidence. This incident is a specimen of the unscrupulous obstacles that were thrown in Burke's way by those who could not endure that an unknown and unconnected man should by merit alone force his way into the lists where high-born knights contend. Shortly after his appointment to the secretaryship, the marquis procured his election to Parliament for the burgh of Wendenover; and henceforth it was impossible that his enemies could hide his light, or limit his genius to animating puppets. The appearance of Mr. Burke in Parliament as the henchman of the Marquis of Rockingham was at a time when the political situation was most difficult and entangled. The finances were depressed by the expenses of war, the people irritated by increased burdens, and the king driven to the utmost straits to find an administration equal to the ordinary conduct of affairs. Successive cabinets had been formed and rapidly dissolved. Lord Bute had been followed by Mr. Grenville, able as a financier, but as a statesman blind and infatuated. The American States seemed to him to present a fine field for taxation; and he accordingly framed the Stamp Act to relieve the British taxpayer at the expense of the colonial. The right of imposing taxes, however, could not for a moment be admitted to reside where the colonies were not constitutionally represented; and the power of the British Parliament to tax Americans was boldly denied and set at defiance. The strong remonstrances of the colonists were supported by the most eminent members of the Opposition at home; and the active measures of combination against British trade adopted by the Americans, until the obnoxious claim should be withdrawn, had a most ruinous effect upon commerce. But, on the other hand, the right of taxation was fiercely asserted by popular feeling; the king was bent upon maintaining an imaginary prerogative; and the ministry found it equally difficult to advance or recede. The Grenville administration, unable to steer through the difficulties to which its policy had given rise, was presently dismissed; and the attempts to conciliate Pitt having failed, proposals were at length, after much natural hesitation, accepted by the moderate Whigs, who followed the Marquis of Rockingham. Burke, like the chief under whom he now took service as confidential adviser, was a Whig of the Revolution, and as such his influence was wholly on the side of the American colonists; but Lord Rockingham was pressed, on the other hand, by the domineering resolve which had strongly taken possession of the English masses to insist upon colonial taxation, the stubbornness of the king on the same side, and the whole power of the ejected Grenville party; nor were the majority of his own cabinet prepared to surrender the right of taxation. A compromise was all that was possible to the ministers under these circumstances. It was resolved to propose the repeal of the Stamp Act; but the advice of some ministers that the preamble should contain a denial of the right, was negatived by the rest; and a simple repeal to satisfy the colonies, and another Act, to satisfy parties at home, censuring their refractory conduct, and asserting the right of colonial legislation to reside in the British parliament, were the measures ultimately determined upon. It was in January

1766 that Burke first spoke in the House of Commons, the occasion being a debate on the repeal of Grenville's Act. His speech produced an extraordinary effect, and turned the balance in favour of the government. Pitt had the generosity to pass a glowing eulogium upon it, and the House of Commons was struck with astonishment at the extent of his information, the force of his ideas, and the broad currents of his eloquence. Never was such a complete success; and this first effort was followed by others equally vigorous, which showed that he had not expended all his strength upon a single effort, but that his powers in making it were at their ordinary level. The Stamp Act was repealed, to a great degree, by his astonishing efforts, but not without violent opposition; and it was, unfortunately, necessary to carry out the compromise by the reservation of England's right to do what she had already found to be impossible. Nothing could be more weak and inconsistent than this effort to save her pride while acknowledging her defeats; but it was forced upon the ministry by the court and public opinion. An act of indemnity to those who had resisted the operation of the Stamp Act followed; but indemnification was also required for those who by the resistance had suffered in property. On the whole, the Marquis of Rockingham's ministry, steered by Burke, pursued a wise and moderate policy; but the popularity which they were earning was intolerable to those who had hoped to see them fail; and even while they were succeeding in the work of legislation, their position was being insidiously undermined. They had fallen under the hapless displeasure of the court, and through the intrigues of envious rivals were at last dismissed from office; but they retired with the warmest gratitude of the country from a position into which they had been in a manner forced. Mr. Burke afterwards described the position thus:—"The household troops openly revolted. The allies of ministry—those I mean who supported some of their measures, but refused responsibility for any—endeavoured to undermine their credit, and to take ground which would be fatal to the success of every cause which they would be thought to countenance. The question of repeal was brought on by the ministry in the committee of this House, in the very instant when it was known that more than one court negotiation was carrying on with the heads of the Opposition. Everything on every side was full of traps and mines. Earth below shook; heaven above menaced; all the elements of ministerial safety were dissolved. It was in the midst of this chaos of plots and counterplots—it was in the midst of this complicated warfare against public opposition and private treachery, that the firmness of that noble person (Lord Rockingham) was put to the proof. He never stirred from his ground—no, not an inch. He remained firm and determined in principle, in measure, and in conduct. He practised no managements. He secured no retreat. He sought no apology."\*

Of this praise Mr. Burke was equally deserving with his leader. In the cabinet itself, as he hinted, there had not been perfect fidelity. Grafton suddenly resigned at the pinch; Conway transferred himself to the ministry that ousted Rockingham; but Burke never wavered.

\* Speech on American taxation.



In the last days of the administration, when it was plainly sinking to its ruin, he had sought the post vacated by the Duke of Grafton to give him the standing in the House of a retired minister, but the end came before the arrangement could be accomplished. He might, undoubtedly, have obtained the better position of an actual minister in Pitt's cabinet, but he at once made up his mind to remain out of office, if not in opposition, in the attitude of his party.

To avoid the imputation of staying to be looked for, he resolved on paying a visit to his friends in Ireland. Burke was one of those men of impracticable temper who are seldom successful according to the popular notions of success, but are much praised by historians. He had selected his own path; the favour of courts and profits of office were to find him there, and there alone. Before going to Ireland, he drew up a manifesto entitled, "A Short Account of a Short Administration." In a few pages he showed how much the ministry had done, and vindicated its conduct of public affairs. Wisdom is, indeed, justified of her children; and results showed that the policy of the Rockingham cabinet had been wise, more convincingly than even Burke's pen could demonstrate.

Contentment returned to the colonies; the usual taxes were paid; trade fell into its old routine; and civil authority was restored. The wound was closed, and would have been in the process of time completely healed if the action of successive administrations had permitted. It may be said of Rockingham's ministry, and of no other, that its continuance in office for a few years would most likely have turned away the disasters that were about to fall upon England and her colonies. It was long after stated by Mr. Penn, at the bar of the House of Lords, that the colonies would have been pacified, and no further consequences would have ensued, if the policy of Lord Rockingham had been adhered to.

The difficulty of forming a ministry to succeed was very great. Lord Chatham came in with a cabinet famous for its composition of heterogeneous and inapt materials. This has been immortalised in a celebrated passage in one of Burke's speeches. "He put together so curious a piece of joinery, so craftily indented and whimsically dove-tailed—a cabinet so variously inlaid—such a piece of diversified mosaic—such a tessellated pavement without cement—here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white—patriots and courtiers, king's friends and republicans—whigs and tories—treacherous friends and open enemies—that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on. . . ."

It was in the end of the year (1766) that he returned to London from Ireland, where the reception of her illustrious son had made his mother, a homely and simple-minded old lady, very proud and happy. He was offered a seat at the Board of Trade, and the Marquis of Rockingham, anxious for his advancement, strongly advised him to accept office; but Mr. Burke, who saw the true character of the motley administration which was still in process of being formed, firmly resolved to adhere to his own party, and rejected the overtures. He consequently took his own course in the House, and soon established himself as the leader of the most powerful section of the Opposition.

For some time there was little occasion for effort, as the Chatham administration was falling to pieces under its own ill-adjusted weight. The following notices mark the course of Mr. Burke's continued ascent. We find, in a letter of his relative, William Burke:—"Our friend E. B. has acted all along with so unwearied a worthiness, that the world does him the justice to believe that, in his public conduct, he has no one end in view but the public good." Lord Charlemont, in one of his visits to London in 1767, writes to Mr. Flood:—"I some time ago sent to Leland an account of our friend Burke's unparalleled success, which I suppose he has communicated to you. His character daily rises, and Barré's is totally eclipsed by him; his praise is universal, and even the Opposition, who own his superior talents, can find nothing to say against him but that he is an impudent fellow." This exactly expresses the strong prejudice that prevailed amongst the governing classes in England at that time against admitting to their order any one not upheld by parliamentary influence, or high and weighty connection. Mr. Burke was the first who rose by the sheer force of ability. Outside his own circle the public was not prepared for the portent of an unknown and unconnected borough member starting at once into the place appropriated for the representation of great cities and counties, or the descendants of the highest aristocracy. But no impediment could prevent such powers as his from outstripping every one in the race. The hapless condition of the ministry, the helmsman of which seemed to have gone below leaving his charge a sport of the waves, which were just then troubled enough, gave Burke continual opportunities of inflicting moral defeats which the numerical strength of his opponents made all the more galling. He professed to treat as ciphers the disorganised crew that constituted the ministry, who were in fact wholly uninformed of the destination of their policy, and placed in a ludicrously helpless position by the inactivity or total absence of their chief. But a while the real adherents of Chatham were adrift, those whom he had taken in with totally opposite opinions became masters of the situation. In the commencement of 1767, the general direction of public opinion seemed to be adverse to the Americans. Mr. Grenville, the author of the original mischief, proposed to raise a revenue upon them to the amount of £400,000; and Mr. Townshend, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer, agreed in the principle, but hesitated as to the time. The Americans were already aware of the general feeling in England, and of the design entertained by principal members of the administration, and displayed on their part a strong disposition to resist. It was generally known that resistance was in preparation; a few voices were raised to forewarn, but they made no impression. On the 13th of May, Townshend moved that the Assembly of New York should be suspended for disobedience, and that the right of taxation be declared indisputable. He also introduced a bill for taxing glass, paper, painters' colours, and tea. Mr. Burke made a splendid struggle, but his opposition was overborne. In the course of that session the measures passed. All this time Chatham, who was ostensibly at the head of the government, continued in his mysterious retirement, and took no actual part in public affairs. The cabinet became at length so embarrassed that the king was driven to an effort to



organise an efficient ministry. Proposals were made to the Marquis of Rockingham, but he insisted on conditions of taking office to which the king would not accede. The American policy was the hitch. As, on the previous occasion, the marquis would have reversed the policy of his predecessors, and this the king would not hear of. The rejection of General Conway's name, on account of his being openly committed to the same policy of conciliation, further tended to make a Rockingham ministry impossible. Burke took a most disinterested part in the matter, and warmly congratulated the Marquis on his escape from an entangling position. Charles Townshend dying suddenly, Chatham was applied to again to re-form the ministry, but he would listen to no terms. After much complicated negotiation, it was pieced together again with the Duke of Grafton as premier, Lord North being persuaded to take office as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Burke refused overtures to join the new combination. In this year (1768) he had purchased Gregories, a small property near Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire, for £20,000. This sum he partly raised by the sale of his Irish estate, the remainder being advanced on mortgage by the Marquis of Rockingham. Possibly he was obliged also to receive assistance from his cousin, William Burke, as the expense of the purchase was considerably increased by his having to buy the marbles and pictures, with the latter of which the house was filled from top to bottom. Here the great statesman speedily became an admirable farmer. In the intervals of parliamentary attendance he pursued his country avocations with an assiduity, interest, and even skill, as great as if the breeding of fat porkers, and the sowing of his wheat, were his only end in life. In this, as in every other subject to which he turned his attention, the accuracy and extent of the knowledge that he rapidly acquired was perfectly marvellous. These quiet country pursuits must have afforded a delightful relief to Mr. Burke from his vain and arduous struggle with destiny. In consequence of Townshend's Act and other provocations, the Massachusetts Assembly sent a circular to the other colonies inviting a combined resistance. A retraction was demanded by the Government, and being point-blank refused, the assembly was dissolved by Governor Bernard. The resistance of the colonists called out severe measures. In January 1769, the Duke of Bedford moved and carried an address in the House of Lords to revive a statute of Henry VIII., by which the American patriots might be tried in England. It was also carried in the Commons in spite of a determined opposition. Owing to the violence of the people of Boston, who were determined to prohibit British imports by force, it was necessary to despatch a naval and military force to that town, by which it was for the moment overawed; but this step only aroused the spirit of the colonists, and impelled them to take more decided measures. The ministry began to feel that something must be retracted, and a circular was transmitted offering to remove the obnoxious duties; but it was now too late for compromise; the right was still maintained; and the duty on tea, insignificant in itself, still formed a ground of resistance to claims of jurisdiction which could never be conceded.

We are thus brought up to 1770, when it may be considered that all parties to this great question had definitively taken their ground in the

contest. It was in this year that Mr. Burke published his celebrated treatise on the Causes of the Present Discontents. The description of the then state of things is worthy of quotation as an important page of history from the ablest observer of the time it describes:—"Nobody, I believe, will consider it merely as the language of spleen or disappointment, if I say that there is something peculiarly alarming in the present juncture. There is hardly a man, in or out of power, who holds any other language. That Government is at once dreaded and condemned; that the laws are deprived of all their respected and salutary terrors; that their inaction is a subject of ridicule, and their exertion of abhorrence; that rank, office, and title, and all the solemn plausibilities of the world, have lost their reverence and effect; that our foreign politics are as much deranged as our domestic policy; that our dependencies are slackened in their affection and loosed from their obedience; that we know neither how to yield nor how to enforce; that hardly anything, above or below, abroad or at home, is sound and entire; but that disconnection and confusion in offices, in parties, in families, in parliament, in the nation, prevail beyond the disorders of any former time;—these are facts universally admitted and lamented." Such was Burke's view of the time. It was, indeed, the beginning of troubles which could not be foreseen by mortal eye; but the theory by which Burke partly accounted for this state of things, that it arose from the project of the court to get rid of all that opposed its despotic sway, whether the power and prestige of the peerage, or the power and prestige of men like himself, was manifestly inadequate, if not wholly untrue. It was difficult for any man at the moment to perceive that, under the apparent stability of affairs, a mighty, world-wide revolution had long been gathering which should, before it had expended its force, shake down thrones and ancient dynasties, and cover the whole surface of the world with change.

To Mr. Burke the chief interest for the years that followed was the American question; but his activity in the House as leader of the Opposition was not limited to this. There was no member who took a more general and effective part in debate and business, particularly in every matter that related to constitutional rights and the liberty of the subject. His speech in 1770, on the power of the Attorney-General to file *ex officio* informations, was a memorable effort; and in the following year he exerted himself with great vigour to carry two bills for ascertaining the rights of electors. He also framed a bill which was brought forward by Mr. Dowdeswell for settling the rights of juries, establishing them as judges of law as well as fact in cases of libel. This was rejected on the ground that it gave a power which was new, whereas Mr. Burke's design had been to establish a right which was old, as was afterwards laid down by legal authority. The year 1771 was chiefly remarkable for the birth of the Fourth Estate. Mr. Burke was greatly instrumental in effecting this happy deliverance. Many members—among others, Mr. Burke himself—had often had reason to complain of the unfair reports of their speeches in several journals, which had given rise to several angry debates. Colonel Onslow had been much attacked in the newspapers, and resolved to have revenge upon his tormentors. He moved that the printers of certain journals



should be brought to justice for infringing the order which forbid their printing the transactions of the House of Commons. Burke and Turner were the only ones who opposed. They gallantly struggled against the full torrent of irritated and aggrieved members, but their opposition was swept away; the motion was carried, and the printers ordered to appear. Some complied, others refused. After a debate, in which the minority interposed so many divisions that the patience of the Speaker was quite worn out, and such a resistance was not likely again to be lightly provoked, the Sergeant-at-Arms was ordered to arrest the refractory printers. The order failed; but in the meanwhile other delinquencies were brought under the notice of the House by Colonel Onslow. A long series of motions continued to excite the House and provoke the public mind, until one of the persons arrested adopted a new course of defence. When taken into custody by a messenger of the House, the person so arrested—a printer named Miller—sent for a city constable, to whom he gave the messenger in charge. The messenger, to detain his prisoner, adopted the same expedient. Both were brought before the sitting magistrate, who immediately dismissed the printer as not being in the custody of a legal officer. The consequence was serious, as might be anticipated, for the contest was transferred from the printers to the City of London. The passions of the people were roused into a fearful agitation. The question from a trifle became one of the deepest moment; it was whether the liberty of the subject was to be sacrificed to establish the authority of parliament. The Lord Mayor was ordered to attend. He came escorted by a furious mob, and returned drawn back to the city by the people. The proceedings went on for several days, and ended in the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver being sent to the Tower. Mr. Burke's speech was ill heard and not reported; but we gather from the debates that he lamented the miserable conduct of the House, which had left to itself hardly any prudent course, but adopted the most imprudent of all. The refusal to hear the prisoners by counsel he considered unjust and unconstitutional. On concluding his speech he withdrew with many of his friends; and soon after, in company with the Marquis of Rockingham and the Dukes of Portland and Manchester, went to visit Alderman Oliver in the Tower. The final result of this struggle was that the right was established of publishing the parliamentary debates.

In the year 1771 we find Mr. Burke opposing Alderman Sawbridge's motion for triennial parliaments—thus illustrating the moderation and impartiality by which he and his party were so honourably distinguished. He resolved to uphold the power of parliament against the encroachments of the Court and extreme democracy alike, but at the same time never flinching from standing out for the liberty of the subject and the public rights. Mr. Burke was perhaps, even at this still early period of his career, slowly beginning to apprehend that he stood in the dawn of a revolution, and that it behoved his party to present two fronts—one, as ever, to oppression; the other to democracy. It was this that exposed him to the charge of inconsistency, because he saw the necessity of preserving a medium and guarded course. We may mention, as another instance of the independent manner in which Mr. Burke sometimes turned against liberal measures where he thought

them premature or dangerous. In 1772, Sir William Meredith brought forward a petition signed by a numerous body of the clergy, asking for relief from the necessity of signing the *Thirty-nine Articles*. The debate was characterised by the irreverence with which religious matters are often treated in the British parliament. Mr. Burke was always the ardent advocate of liberty of opinion and toleration; but he at once saw that the question, in this instance, was not one of liberty of conscience, but as to the existence of the church. He took up the ground that there was no *restraint*; no one was compelled to adopt or adhere to the church, which, on the lowest view, is an institution for the maintenance of the doctrines agreed upon by those who belong to it; and to say that a church so constituted was to be administered by those who could not conscientiously assent to those doctrines, involved a direct contradiction. Any liberal movement in this direction should proceed in the way of the church herself enlarging her boundaries, and pulling down those fences which annoy and perhaps give a roving tendency to some who do not like to feel themselves in any degree confined, but not in the way of the clergy being allowed to stay outside or inside as they pleased. Mr. Burke was himself a sincere believer in Christianity; in boyhood Richard Shackleton and he had studied in the Bible together, and he was the means, about the time of which we are now writing, of reclaiming his friend Barry from infidelity.

Meanwhile the colonial difficulty was becoming more utterly hopeless and unmanageable. In 1771, Mr. Burke's efforts, and the high character he had acquired for knowledge of American affairs, obtained for him the appointment of Agent for New York. This appointment was worth £700 a year. In this position he was able to render considerable service to his clients in reference to the Quebec bill, which, as first brought in, defined the boundaries of the province in a manner that compromised their boundary. In rectifying this, his pertinacity proved successful; but on greater matters connected with the American colonies, all his eloquence, his knowledge of the subject, and almost prophetic foresight, counted for nothing. There was too great a gulf between the statesman and his hearers for his warnings to be heard across. Burke's prophecies were not, as in the singular case of the prophet of the Ninevites, frustrated by being believed. He was as correct and as useless as prophets generally prove. The affairs of the East India Company now became mixed up with those of the colonies; and probably Burke, who had been favourable to the Company previously, and formed one of the majority that exonerated Clive, was led from this circumstance to view it in a less friendly light. By the Regulating Act, the government of India was put on quite a new, and in fact an imperial basis. Warren Hastings, the governor of Bengal, was appointed the first Governor-General of India; and the directors were deprived of the power which they had enjoyed of despotic eastern princes. To make up for this dethronement a concession was made to them; their warehouses were glutted with tea, and they asked that this commodity should be relieved from duty. It was remitted in England, but the colonial port duty of threepence on the pound retained, as well to keep up the right of imperial taxation, as that the colonists might



find it their interest to pay the threepence duty in order to benefit by the large remission of the drawback in England. Burke, who had maintained the silence of despair throughout the progress of the discussion, spoke with his usual ability on the third reading, but without any hope of affecting the issue. In the beginning of 1773 he had paid a visit to Paris, with a view to the education of his son Richard, whom he decided to place at Auxerre in charge of a tutor to learn the French language. In this visit he formed a wonderfully correct view of the tendency of society in France, and the approaching rise of democracy there, which made him more than ever apprehensive of the colonial policy of England. What seemed to politicians of more bounded views a local disturbance, was to him part of the world-wide wave of revolution which filled the whole horizon. Meanwhile the king and his ministers were full of hope that their device would succeed in inducing the Americans to submit to taxation. The tea ships arrived in the port of Boston, but the snare was in vain set in the sight of the wary colonists, and they took a summary method of defeating the astute scheme by emptying the cargoes into the sea. Another circumstance still further embittered the quarrel. Some private letters of Governor Hutchinson and the Chief-Justice of Massachusetts, recommending armed force, fell into the hands of Dr. Franklin, agent for the province, and Deputy Postmaster-General for America. He published extracts from the letters, and had them circulated in all the colonies. We cannot pronounce an opinion upon the propriety of the act of publication, or the manner in which the letters were obtained; but they excited the deepest resentment in America, and a petition was presented by the State of Massachusetts for the removal of the officials implicated, which was rejected by the Privy Council, while Dr. Franklin himself was dismissed from his employment. The next step was a retributive bill for closing the port of Boston, and the removal of revenue officers; and against this Burke made an able speech on the third reading. But it was on the occasion of Mr. Rose Fuller's motion, that the House should take into consideration the removal of the tax of threepence on the pound of tea, to qualify with conciliation the harsh measure which had just been passed, that Burke delivered his great speech on American taxation. The House was fatigued; the conclusion was foregone. Burke rose to speak to a thin and listless audience. The report that he was on his legs—that he was making a great speech—soon spread through the lobbies and staircases, and a dense crowd filled the House. The whole assembly was fixed in breathless attention, and the American agents in the galleries were with difficulty restrained from applause. When the orator paused for a moment, and said that he feared that he was wearying the audience, he was answered by general cries of "Go on! go on!" Arguments, illustrations, pathetic appeals, and pointed retorts, followed each other with a closeness which did not for a moment allow the interest to flag. The previous speeches were so much the ground-work of argument, that this surpassing effort was evidently, in form and language, extemporaneous. Notes were fortunately taken by several persons present, and to this we are indebted for the preservation of some of the most perfect specimens extant of the resources of eloquence. After one of those splendid bursts that followed each other

in close succession. Lord John Townshend, who had been familiar with the former leaders of debate, exclaimed, "Good heavens! what a man is this! Where could he have found such transcendant powers?" The publication of this speech from his friends' notes produced as great an effect as its delivery; and it is known that Lord North was so impressed by his reasoning as to feel for a time disposed to retrace his steps; and he actually offered in the next session to repeal the tea duty (when it was too late, and the ill feeling had advanced far beyond the power of such a concession to allay it), if this would satisfy the colonists. The sketch of Mr. Burke in Goldsmith's *Retaliation*, from which the popular notion of his pertinacity against unfavourable audiences is principally derived, must have been written some time before this, for the work was added to from time to time, and was still unfinished at the poet's death in 1774. Mr. Burke, if he saw the intended likeness, took no offence at it. He and Dr. Johnson were the directors of the funeral.

Bills were now introduced by the Government stripping the colonists of their judicial rights, the principal being the Massachusetts Bill, which deprived that colony of its chartered privileges, and vested in the crown the nomination to all important offices. On the third reading Burke made a speech protesting against the measure, which rose to a height of sombre grandeur such perhaps as no orator has ever reached before or since; but in this most refined of assemblies he was interrupted by the noises of drunken members, and he was obliged to rebuke them indignantly.

It was about this time (1774) that Dr. Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. Thrale paid a visit to Beaconfield. Johnson, though violent in his aversion to the Whigs, made an exception in favour of the only contemporary to whom he admitted an intellectual superiority. To Mr. Burke alone he was accustomed to listen with respectful deference; and such a companion was as a volume of perpetual meditation and interest, supplying a fuel for thought which, next to the pleasure of dictation to his wondering hearers, the Doctor loved the best. Mr. Burke exercised all his fascination to make his home agreeable to his revered friend, and repressed the exercise of those powers which at other times made their intercourse less grateful to one whose ambition was colloquial victory. While wandering through the grounds, Dr. Johnson is said to have expressed his admiration of his friend's good fortune and good taste. After indulging in a fit of that thoughtful meditation to which he was accustomed, he broke silence with the exclamation, "*Non equidem invideo, miror magis!*" In the same year Mr. Burke had the opportunity to defend the Doctor's pension in the House against Mr. Thomas Townshend.

The parliament was now drawing to the end of its existence, and Mr. Burke's prospects of a seat in the next were extremely uncertain. He had hitherto sat for the borough of Wendover; but Lord Verney, to whom it belonged, was then in embarrassed circumstances, and obliged to make money of his parliamentary boroughs, and no longer therefore able to accommodate Mr. Burke with a seat. It was suggested by Wilkes that he should be put up as the popular candidate for Westminster; but when the time drew near, a wealthier candidate appeared



in the person of Lord Mahon, Chatham's new son-in-law, and the disinterested patriot withdrew his support from the comparatively poor commoner. An idea of starting him as a candidate for Bristol had also been taken up by some of his friends, but then dropped out of sight. When at last the ministry having dissolved, the great scramble for seats commenced, Burke wrote to Lord Rockingham to intimate that, seeing no prospect of a seat, he was disposed to withdraw from politics; and on this the marquis instantly placed at his disposal his own borough of Malton. He had just been elected, and was sitting down to dinner with his new constituents, when he received a notification from Bristol, where the poll was already in progress, that his friends had proposed him as a colleague to Mr. Cruger, the other Whig candidate—the Tory candidates being Lord Clare and Mr. Brickdale—and he was invited to present himself immediately. This invitation was too flattering to be refused, and his Malton friends advised him to act upon it. He accordingly started on the evening of Tuesday, and arrived at Bristol on Thursday, after being more than forty hours on the road without stopping. He at once went to the hustings and addressed the electors, and at the end of a month's polling was elected by a good majority. In returning thanks for his election, following Mr. Cruger, who declared that he would in all things be guided by the wishes of his constituents, Mr. Burke strongly asserted his right to act independently upon his own convictions, and plainly told his constituents that he was not member for Bristol so much as member of the imperial parliament, and that it was his duty not to act as a mere delegate of a particular constituency, but to consult for the general good. This bold declaration of independence no doubt not a little astonished the worthy merchants of Bristol, but it was well received, and increased the respect with which they already regarded him. After his election, and all the speech-making and dining consequent upon it was over, he was glad to return to Beaconsfield, and had the great pleasure upon the way home of paying a visit to his son, who was now returned from France, and established in Oxford, and whose early success was giving promise of a brilliant career. Meanwhile the agitation in the colonies was increasing; the penal bills were doing their work, and binding all the States into a confederation of resistance; while General Gage, the new Governor of Massachusetts, by taking measures that pointed to the expectation of civil war, and intrenching the troops at Boston, made the people turn their thoughts in that direction. A general congress of twelve States, assembled at Philadelphia, approved of the resistance at Boston, memorialised the king and people of Great Britain, and notified to General Gage their energetic disapproval of his hostile military operations. Parliament met in November; the royal speech was decidedly warlike; and the amendments to the address proposed in the Lords and Commons were thrown out in both houses. Burke made one of his eloquent and prophetic speeches, in which he contrasted the glorious opening of the reign of George III. with the condition to which the empire was now brought, and predicted, as the consequence of the insane course the ministry was pursuing in baiting the colonies into an insurrection, their inevitable loss. Indeed, it is impossible, we should suppose, for any Englishman at the present day to read the

history of that time without feeling entirely against his own country, and entirely with the kindred people whose invaluable alliance we then forfeited. While everything tended to civil war no one seemed to care where the ship of State was drifting, and the infatuated crew mocked at the few sober men who distinctly heard breakers a-head. Lord North was said to have become irresolute, and to have been taken in hand by the "king's friends," as the creatures of the court were called. While America was arming, England was disarming—so unconscious was the government of the tendency of its policy. Burke and Fox (who was heart and soul with his friend) put out all their might against the ministry, but were always beaten in the divisions by two to one. Sir William Meredith, who had been a member of the Marquis of Rockingham's government, but had accepted the office of Controller of the Household from Lord North, constantly pitted himself in debate against Mr. Burke; and his solemn and blundering oratory found an admirable butt for the wit of his great opponent. On one occasion, which Walpole in his letters notices as a great success, Burke had described the absurd position of General Gage, as at the same time blockaded and pretending to blockade; allowing his cannon to be stolen, and making reprisals by burning his own straw, and destroying his bricks and mortar. Sir William rose and accused Burke of desiring bloodshed, and asserted that General Gage's troops had been of the greatest service in protecting the property of the merchants, in being an asylum for the magistrates, and in blocking up the harbour. Burke caused much laughter by his reply. He had heard of asylums for orphans, for thieves, and for loose women, but never before of an asylum for magistrates. The army, it appeared, protected trade in a place where all commerce was prohibited by law. As for the blocking up of the harbour, this was the first time that the world had seen an army instead of a fleet blockading a port. At the entrance of Dublin harbour there was a north and a south bull, but such a bull as this, even as a native of Ireland, he had never known. Lord North had now at last made up his mind and moved an address to the king, declaring that a rebellion existed in the province of Massachusetts Bay, and pledging the Commons to stand by their sovereign in quelling it. Burke and Fox vigorously but vainly resisted—the former asking if it was called rebellion to drown tea like a puppy-dog in Boston harbour, and in resistance to a tyrannical government. Nothing could exceed the boldness with which, at this great crisis, he spoke out his mind; and at one time there were murmurs abroad that he and some others were traitors, and ought to be sent to the Tower. But that Burke was not a man to be cowed into silence, was fully shown not only during the American war, but conspicuously in the Gordon Riots. When the Prime Minister soon after the Address proposed a bill to prohibit the American colonies from all trade not only with England and Ireland, but with the West Indies also, Burke, who felt the most intense detestation of wrong and oppression in every form, was kindled to a white heat of indignation, and used such terrible invective against the ministry that had dared to propose a measure to reduce entire trading populations of our own race to beggary, that he was again and again called to order. But he lashed himself against a



rock—the ministry stood immoveable on its majority. In the Upper House an amendment was added extending the prohibition to other colonies. We fancy that, when not long after Burke wrote on his friend Dowdswell's tomb that his last efforts were spent in attempting to avert a civil war, which, being unable to prevent, he had not the misfortune to see, he must have been feeling a satisfaction in looking back upon his own efforts. The most intelligent portion of his countrymen appreciated the consistent resistance he made to the hateful policy of the majority; he received many tokens of approbation—among others, a public letter of thanks from the merchants of Birmingham.

On the first day of the session in 1775, Lord Chatham, who acted irrespective of the Rockingham party, and never failed with the rancour of jealousy to lay the blame of the existing situation on their Declaratory Act, proposed as a plan of conciliation the recall of the British troops from Boston. The Rockingham Whigs, rather than split the party, supported his proposal, though disapproving of leaving to their fate the English sympathisers among the colonists. A few days after he brought in a Conciliation Bill, by which the Declaratory Act with the other measures was to be repealed, and again took the opportunity of damaging his own friends to the utmost. Shortly after, Mr. Burke was surprised to receive a private intimation that the Government itself was about to introduce a Conciliatory Bill. It turned out, however, to be only a subterfuge. It was to permit the General Assemblies to impose taxes such as the king and parliament might lay upon them. A section of the Cabinet was indignant even at such a merely nominal concession, and it was with difficulty passed. Mr. Burke foresaw that the colonies would reject it, and his prescience was justified by the result. As it was generally said that the moderate Whigs had no policy but that of opposing the measures of others, it was considered expedient that the party should bring forward a conciliation scheme of their own, and the task was intrusted to Burke. On the 22d of March he rose to bring forward his proposals, which took the form of thirteen resolutions. As it was impossible to contrive a plan by which the colonies should be represented in the British parliament, he proposed that the power of taxation should be reposed in their own assemblies, which were, in fact, parliaments in miniature. His scheme also embraced the repeal of all the penal acts, beginning with Charles Townshend's Revenue Bill. This speech, which lasted three hours, was received with great applause, and was probably equal to that of the preceding year. It contained passages of eloquence only to be paralleled in his own speeches—passages in which the highest and most kindling imagination takes its ground on the profoundest reason, and the most permanent and vital truth. Lord Chatham remarked that it was "very seasonable, very reasonable, and very eloquent." And Mr. Fox said of it in the House, twenty years after, "Let gentlemen read this speech by day, and meditate upon it by night; let them peruse it again and again; study it; imprint it on their minds; impress it on their hearts." The majority against the resolutions was 270 to 78; but Mr. Burke's "Conciliation Speech" was published and read by every one of education, and produced a profound impression. A pamphleteering oppo-

nent sprang up in the person of Dean Tucker, who was so far in advance of his time as to assert that England would be better off without the colonies (which had caused the ruin of Spain), and that if they were to take themselves off in a passion, they, and not the mother country, would be the losers. Burke was amused at this folly, which, however, has come to be taken up seriously by the *doctrinaires* of our own day.

Meanwhile the angry separation was commencing; blood was drawn in the field, and the American war had begun. Its progress is foreign to our task. In November Mr. Burke made one more effort, in which he was supported by Charles Fox, to conciliate the colonists by a bill modelled upon a statute of the reign of Edward, and substantially giving up the right of taxation. The majority against it was 210 to 105. The minority would have been larger but for a promise that the Government was about to introduce a scheme of pacification, which turned out to be a plan for starving the colonists, called the Prohibitory Bill. After opposing this pacific measure in all its stages, Mr. Burke finally was the author of the protest recorded against it by the Opposition. During the long and unhappy civil war with our colonies, Mr. Burke continued to proclaim the errors of the war, and the righteousness of the cause against which it was waged. Right was superior in his mind to patriotism, and from first to last he was sternly consistent. It was contemplated for a time that the Rockingham party should secede, but this design was, on mature consideration, abandoned, although they abstained to a great degree from taking a part in public affairs. On the banks of that stream, however, Mr. Burke could not long remain an idle spectator of the wreck of national greatness which was passing before his eyes. On the proposal to suspend the statute of *Habeas Corpus*, to facilitate the arrest of dangerous characters, such as the incendiary who had set Bristol on fire, some of the party could no longer restrain themselves from attending in their place to oppose it; and this made the position of the others false and untenable. Mr. Burke, who was one of the members thus situated, considered an explanation necessary, and accordingly addressed a letter to the sheriffs of Bristol, which was shortly after published under that title. In this letter he boldly avowed his sympathy with the colonial cause; lamented the miseries to which people of our own race were subjected by the aid of foreign mercenaries and savages, and defended himself and his party for their secession from parliament. The question of paying George the Third's debts was considered a good opportunity for the return of the party to the Opposition benches. Lord John Cavendish moved for the discharge of the order for going into committee, and Burke made a vigorous attack on the ministry, and the corrupt purposes to which it was believed the money had been applied. Of course the Opposition was unsuccessful, but a triumph was gained a few days subsequently on the bold address of Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, in presenting the bill to the king; he expressed a hope that a wise application would be made of funds found with so much difficulty; and a vote of thanks to him was immediately proposed and carried by the Opposition; and on the king's friends, headed by the truculent Rigby, attacking Sir Fletcher, the vote was more emphatically repeated.



It was about this time that Mr. Burke sustained a great loss in the death of his father-in-law, Dr. Nugent, who had always been his truest and most devoted friend.

The American struggle was now drawing to a close, glorious for the colonists, unhappy for the mother country. On the 17th of October General Burgoyne signed the Convention of Saratoga, by which he and his army surrendered themselves prisoners of war. On the news of this misfortune a furious storm burst upon ministers; but they managed to obtain a breathing-time in the Christmas recess, during which interval they not only received large voluntary subscriptions for carrying on the war, but made a considerable levy of men, without the sanction of parliament. Meanwhile the Opposition was equally busy. Burke was for impeaching the ministry as being answerable for the calamities of the nation; the Marquis of Rockingham, however, was not prepared to sanction so bold a course. On the 22d of February 1778, Fox made his great speech in favour of bringing the war to a close; the ministry had no reply, but a division, in which the minority was increased by more than half its usual strength. On the 6th Burke followed with another tremendous blow, which made the ministry stagger. His speech on the employment against the English people of America of Indian savages was one of the most brilliant he ever made. Sir George Savile said of it—"He who did not hear that speech has not witnessed the greatest triumph of eloquence within memory." It lasted for three hours and a-half, and made his enemies both laugh and cry. Governor Johnstone declared it was well that strangers were excluded, or they would have torn the ministers to pieces. Horace Walpole, in his Correspondence, says that the "parody of Burgoyne's talk" [alluding to his proclamation] "with the Indians was the chef d'œuvre of wit, humour, and just satire, and almost suffocated Lord North himself with laughter, as his pathetic description of the cis-Atlantic army 'drew iron tears down Barré's cheek.' I wish I could give you an idea of that superlative oration. He was pressed to print it, but says he has not time during the session." More likely Burke's reason for not printing his speech was the very fact that it had produced such an unequalled effect in speaking, from which its publication could only have detracted. Those greatest efforts of the orator's genius live best in the memory of the privileged audience; and there they had also better die, for their greatness cannot be fixed. In the division with which the night ended, the ministerial majority fell to eighty-six. Mr. Burke had now attained the highest position in the House; he was no longer "the adventurer" or the "impudent fellow" of times gone by, but the most respected of public men, and the most feared by his opponents. No man was allowed the same license. It is recorded that, a few nights after his great speech, one of the ministers having confessed that the navy estimates were never adhered to, and that the supplies were used in whatever way it pleased the Admiralty, Burke, who had been laboriously studying the estimates, was so enraged that he flung the handsomely-bound volume across the house at the ministerial bench, and narrowly missed the shins of the Hon. Wellbore Ellis.

At last the time came when Lord North was obliged to propose in the House the identical plan of conciliation which had been brought

forward by Mr. Burke three years before, not then as a capitulation, but as a measure of justice. The country gentlemen saw with silent astonishment the Prime Minister calmly contradicting the policy in which they had supported him for years. The Opposition were not slow to claim the moral victory; and the secret spring of the change, the treaty of alliance which had just been signed between France and "the independent states of America," was revealed by Fox, and not denied by ministers. The bill, somewhat curtailed by the king's friends, passed both Houses, and received the royal sanction; but it came too late; and a surrender which cannot be accepted is both useless and undignified. The commissioners, who were sent out in pursuance of Burke's cast-off scheme of conciliation, were obliged to retreat with the English troops, and ended by exasperating the quarrel they were sent to compose. Burke had been for some time strongly in favour of recognising American independence, and thus either averting the interference of continental powers, or else being in a position to concentrate our forces against the latter. But the party was not united in favour of this policy. Chatham was of a different opinion; and when the Rockingham section had made up their minds that peace, without recognising the accomplished fact of independence, was out of the question, and the Duke of Richmond had given notice in the Upper House of his intention to move an address for the withdrawal of the British forces from America, the great Earl came down to oppose such a policy. The conclusion of the debate is familiar—the close of that great career upon the floor of the house. Burke paid a tribute to the memory of the statesman, from whom he had been parted in life, which deeply affected the House of Commons; he supported the petition of the City that the Earl's body should be interred in St. Paul's, and was one of the pall-bearers at the funeral.

An occasion now arose in which Burke's services were required by his own country. Ireland was overwhelmed with taxation, the burden of the war being added to the usual enormous weight of jobbery, pensions, and sinecures; and when Earl Nugent moved a committee to revise the Irish laws of trade—for Burke warmly supported the motion—he declared that now, more than ever, it was necessary, when our other great dependencies had been lost, that the Irish nation should be admitted to all the privileges of British citizens. He had always been in favour of free trade, and this inclination had been the first thing to bring him under the displeasure of Chatham. Lord Nugent, meeting with no opposition to his motion, brought in four resolutions, to which Burke added a fifth—their scope being to open to Ireland the colonial trade, to permit her to sell her glass anywhere but in Great Britain, and to send her cotton yarn, sailcloth, and cordage, to England, free from a heavy prohibitory duty. The bills were read a first time before the trading community began to take alarm; but Easter intervened ere they were to be taken again, and in that interval members were made to feel the pressure of their constituents. Burke's seat at Bristol was seriously imperilled; his warmest friends were turned into bitter opponents. His popularity was already on the wane, the policy for which he had been retained being lost; and the principles upon which it was founded being now, with fatal consistency, brought to bear upon Ireland.



When the great fires took place at Bristol, Mr. Burke went counter to the popular belief that they were caused by American incendiaries, and to a certain degree turned out to be in the wrong. He now refused to go down to Bristol to allow himself to be reasoned out of his free trade principles, and his attempts to convince his constituents against their own jealousy, selfishness, and prejudice, were entirely unsuccessful. In the House, however, he was more successful. He was the most powerful advocate of the bills, and his speech on the second reading, only an abstract of which has been preserved, was a forestalment of the arguments of free-traders in the present century. He showed the groundlessness of the fears of the petitioners by the fact that their principal objection was to the removal of the restriction on sailcloth, whereas it was found that in reality no restriction existed, and that item had consequently, with his consent, been thrown out. The restriction on cotton yarn had, on a former occasion, been removed without any injurious effect. Although, owing much to those who had brought him in at Bristol free of expense, he was obliged to act, he said, in opposition to their wishes, and implied that this disagreement would be attended by his ceasing to represent the constituency. The second reading was carried by a majority, principally due to the arguments of Burke; but the opposition of the English towns became so frantic, as the possibility dawned upon them more and more of having to admit Ireland to a share in their own prosperity, that Lord North withdrew from his position of friendly neutrality, and caused the measures to be so emasculated as to be of no practical effect. But the time was very near when Ireland, for once in her history, was able to treat with England on equal terms, and to insist upon justice, and nothing short of justice, being done to her. The discussion alone had been of immense service; so many liberal declarations were incidentally made by members on the subject of Roman Catholic disabilities, that a bill was introduced by Sir George Savile for the removal of the most grievous; and another bill was introduced by Lord Richard Cavendish repealing the Act of William the Third, which prevented the Roman Catholics from having any interest in forfeited lands. These bills passed through the House of Commons, and the initiative of the English House was followed by the Irish. Burke, having sent over copies of the bills, the heads of a bill removing the Roman Catholic disabilities with respect to land, and repealing the sacramental test, were passed, and returned for the royal approbation. But this was not so readily obtained. The repeal of the sacramental test, which was proposed to please the Protestant dissenters, excited conscientious scruples in the king, and prejudiced him against the entire measure. His dislike influenced a portion of the ministry, and the bill was in imminent danger. Burke, who was enjoying his holiday at Beaconsfield, received a letter from Wedderburne, now Attorney-General, asking for information, and expressing fears for the bill. He not only replied by letter, but in person, and yet a second time went up to London to see the Lord Chancellor, Thurlow. In London he heard the worst accounts, but he was resolved to stop at nothing to carry the Toleration Bill through this crisis. He assailed the Treasury, and endeavoured to make a capture of Sir Grey Cooper; then on to Lord North, upon whom his reasoning

and earnestness had little effect; then to Lord Thurlow. To the two latter he read a private letter from Pery, the Speaker of the Irish House, saying that this was a never-to-be-recalled opportunity; and that the consequence of losing it in the present position of the empire would, in his opinion, be most disastrous, as it would be to unite against the Government the Roman Catholics and Dissenters. But the difficulty lay not with the ministers, but with the king; and in this quarter, unconsciously to himself, Burke's arguments were heard, and their unanswerable force assented to. In 1764 he had drawn up a petition to the Throne on behalf of his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen, which had lain ever since in the hands of Dr. John Curry, and was now laid before the Lord-Lieutenant, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and by him transmitted to the king. This paper had probably a considerable influence in overcoming the royal obstacle. The repeal of the sacramental test, which is said to have been inserted with the treacherous design of over-weighting the bill, was given up, and the measure being returned to Ireland approved, passed both Houses, and became law. Burke's part in obtaining this measure, and his efforts to procure the removal of restrictions on trade, were gratefully recognised by his countrymen. Dr. Curry, on behalf of some of his Roman Catholic countrymen, sent him £300, which he of course returned. The citizens of Dublin offered him a statue, which he also declined, saying that statues "belonged exclusively to the tomb, the natural and only period of human inconstancy;" and that "the same hands that erect frequently pull down the statue." He had already found at Bristol how ready the people are to vilify and insult their idol should he at any time prove unpropitious; and, as an independent politician pleasing his own conscience, and not to be restrained from doing so by threats or favours, he dreaded the humiliation of being dethroned from a literal pedestal in the streets of Dublin, if he should at any time forfeit his popularity among his fickle countrymen.

The defence of Admiral Keppel, who was one of the best and most popular officers in the navy, was one of the most honourable passages in Mr. Burke's life. The Admiral was a political opponent of the Government, and had refused to serve against the Americans; but on the war breaking out with France, acceded to the strongly-urged personal request of George III., and agreed to take the command of the Channel fleet. He found, however, that the ministry had deceived him as to its condition, and it was a considerable time before he could get to sea. On the 27th of July 1778 he encountered the French fleet off Ushant, and after an indecisive engagement the enemy was enabled to withdraw—the admiral's signal to form line of battle being disregarded by Sir Hugh Palliser, who commanded a division of the fleet, and in this manner by his delay hindered the pursuit. Sir Hugh, being publicly attacked for his misconduct, endeavoured to shift the blame upon Admiral Keppel; and the Admiralty determined to hold a court-martial on the superior officer at the instigation of the subordinate, who was himself obviously the one in fault. It was more than insinuated that Lord Sandwich, who was at the head of the Admiralty, had plotted to bring Keppel into disgrace. This we may dismiss as preposterous; but there is no doubt that a political supporter would



have been treated differently. Burke threw himself with all the chivalry of his character into Keppel's defence. He defended him in the House with a force and a success which even the Attorney-General, Wedderburne, was compelled to admit; and the applause from all sides was hearty and sympathetic. The court-martial was held at Portsmouth, and Mr. Burke sat beside the admiral. The Marquis of Rockingham, the Duke of Richmond, and other leaders of the party, were there. Lord Shelburne had sent Dunning to assist; but the Hon. Thomas Erskine, who had just come into notice, and had been both in the navy and army before going to the bar, conducted the defence. Keppel read a speech, in the composition of which it is said that Burke assisted. Great was the enthusiasm when the gallant old admiral was acquitted, and loud the cheer that was commenced by the Duke of Cumberland when he received back his sword. In token of the gratitude he felt to Burke, and appreciation of his assistance on the trial, he presented him with his portrait by their mutual friend Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The affairs of Ireland now again occupied Parliament; Lord Newhaven proposed an inquiry into the means of affording her commercial relief; Irish commerce was in a desperate condition; the linen of the north lay rotting in the warehouses, and the country lay bare and exposed to the attack of England's enemies; but already more than ten thousand volunteers had taken up arms, and the movement was rapidly spreading. Lord North, however, treated the proposal lightly; enough had been done for Ireland; the trade of England was not to be jeopardised for her advantage. Burke, who, if he did not take the initiative, was always foremost in upholding the rights of his native country, and bitterly resented the manner in which she was treated as a mere colony or dependency of the British Crown (whether by conquest or not matters not, for England has treated all her dependencies as if they were conquests), warned Lord North that this narrow, illiberal policy which had lost the American States, would be attended with the same consequences in Ireland. A compromise was arranged, by which a definite proposal was to be brought forward, and it took the shape of a motion for a committee on the importation by Ireland of her own sugar; but though Lord North allowed the committee to be appointed, on the loud murmurs of the English and Scotch towns becoming audible, he interposed to defeat the measure, asserting that he should never sanction such a proposal. Burke, on the pretext of a motion for an inquiry into the fact of there being a body of troops in Ireland under arms without the knowledge of Government, made a fierce attack upon Lord North for playing fast and loose with that country, and charged him with being the author of anarchy and confusion. For a while Irish grievances dropped out of sight, but to return in a new and startling fashion before the year was out.

It was natural that an English Roman Catholic Relief Act should be supplemented by one for Scotland, and a bill similar to that of the last session was brought in by the Lord Advocate. This was the origin of the establishment of the Protestant Association, which was constituted by a number of sincere but illiberal fanatics, who inflamed the populace against their Roman Catholic brethren, and poured forth torrents of anti-Popery oratory in the shape of pamphlets, sermons, and speeches.

Their efforts at last set the whole country in a blaze, and resulted in a furious persecution. Lord George Gordon was their spokesman in parliament; and when the Roman Catholics in vain had published their wish that the Relief Bill should be withdrawn if that might appease their persecutors, and at last petitioned parliament for protection and compensation for their losses and sufferings, he demanded, in a speech that resembled the speech of a madman, that it should not be allowed to disgrace the table of the House. This petition Burke had presented, in an able speech, which was very severe, and inflicted much mortification on those gentlemen in Scotland who had lately taken part in inflaming the passions of the ignorant; some of them were his warm admirers, and endeavoured to justify themselves by letter. We cannot forbear to quote a few words of his reply, which all clergymen and public speakers and writers would do well to imprint upon their memories:—"Gentlemen of your activity in public affairs, in which you have taken a voluntary part, ought rather to employ your abilities in enlightening than in inflaming the people. We have had disunion enough already, and I heartily wish that your part of the kingdom had manifested one-half of the zeal for the union of our Protestant empire, on terms of equity and freedom, that has been manifested for taking away all justice and all liberty from our Roman Catholic subjects at home. If there had, we should not have been set down in our present miserable condition."

Mr. Burke, in the House of Commons, put himself forward as the champion of toleration against the mad championship of persecution by Lord George Gordon. The Roman Catholics of Scotland were, most of them, like Burke himself, Irishmen in a strange country. The blood in his veins boiled at the treatment to which they were subjected; and Walpole observed that the two champions were equally frantic. A few months more, and parliament was to have the baleful work of the Protestant Association brought to its very doors. Its president, Lord George Gordon, gave notice that on the 2d of June, accompanied by the London, Westminster, and Southwark branches of the Protestant Association, he would present a petition to the House. On the day appointed an immense sea of London roughs, roaring out their ordinary profanity, intent on plunder and riot, officered by religious fanatics, filled Palace Yard and all the approaches to parliament. Bishops were hustled; peers torn from their carriages; statesmen mobbed. Mr. Burke was especially denounced by Lord George Gordon. For several days there was a perfect reign of terror in London. At night the sky was red with the reflection of fires; the prisons were broken open; the houses of all who were suspected of Catholic sympathies were pillaged. Mr. Burke's house in Charles Street was only saved by the military garrison. He and Mrs. Burke, who behaved most heroically, took refuge with General Burgoyne. Burke's friends entreated him to leave London; but instead of doing so, on the day appointed for reconsidering the petition, he went to the House of Commons on foot, making himself known to the mob as he passed along, fearlessly declaring his determination to oppose their demands. His courage disarmed their violence, and he passed unscathed into the House, and poured forth the vials of his indignation upon the ministry who



allowed such a revolution to continue unchecked. It is hard to say what would have been the end of the Gordon riots but for the firmness of George the Third in signing a warrant to the troops to act promptly and decisively against the so-called Protestants. When the peace was at length restored, Burke proposed resolutions asserting the principle of religious freedom, which (somewhat diluted by Lord North) were accepted by the House. In his great speech on this occasion, he referred to his own education, and the lessons of tolerance he had learned from his schoolmaster, who, though a dissenter of the dissenters, had brought him up in good church principles. This appeal to his own early experience was soon to have a more direct application. By way of a sop to the Protestants, a measure was passed by the Commons in spite of Burke's best reasons and eloquence forbidding Roman Catholic schoolmasters to receive Protestant pupils, or Roman Catholic tradesmen Protestant apprentices. This bill would have ruined many hard-working teachers, besides, in the very spirit of modern ultramontaniam, tending to perpetuate the religious divisions which all good men wish in social life to obliterate. Burke's opposition did not end in the Lower House; he used all his influence with the peers, and happily the measure was allowed to lapse at the end of the session. It little mattered to him that the baffled leaders of the Association revived the old absurdities as to his being a Jesuit "in disguise," and a pupil of St. Omèr's; his reputation was now too firmly established to be affected by such foul breaths, which must offend, but could not injure. The annoyance, such as it was, was amply compensated for by knowing that indirectly he was fighting the battle of Roman Catholic Ireland, and of the Roman Catholic friends of his boyhood, in these successful encounters with English bigotry. Many of the disciples of the Protestant Association expiated on the gallows the acts of pillage and incendiariism into which Protestant zeal had betrayed them; but the prisoners found an unexpected champion in Burke himself. His view was that ordinary offences, committed in a time of chaos, might be treated with leniency; but that examples should be made of the religious fanatics. The publication of "Reflections on the Approaching Executions," along with private efforts and intercessions, probably saved the lives of many of the rioters.

A general election was now pending. Burke's position at Bristol was jeopardised both by his independent political course in respect to Irish trade, Roman Catholic relief, and Lord Beauchamp's Debtors' Bill, and by his having, when once he was wedded to the constituency, ceased his wooing of it. He was himself unconscious that his seat was in danger, but on hearing that a contest was impending, intimated that he could only undertake it on the same terms as formerly—viz., being brought in free. On the 6th of November there was a meeting in the Guildhall, and Mr. Burke delivered a speech—as a hustings speech unequalled. His vindication was respectfully received, and resolutions passed requesting him to allow himself to be put in nomination again; but on commencing his canvass, he found that he had no chance of being elected, and retired from the contest. When declaring his withdrawal, he spoke with quiet bitterness. One of the Tory candidates had dropped dead the day before. In reference to this, he said that his

being thus withdrawn from the contest while his desires were as warm and his hopes as eager as any of theirs, illustrated "what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" The party, of course, immediately looked out another saddle for their champion, thus unhorsed in the battle of the elections. If Bristol was no longer to bear him into the fight, he was glad to accept a less splendid but more tractable steed in the borough of Malton. He was not, however, able to get himself elected and take his seat before Christmas; and perhaps this short but important interval, in which his friend Fox was in undivided command of the Opposition, may be regarded as the part of the race in which he was outstripped by his pupil. The temporary supercession became permanent; and the consequence was that he who must have occupied a high position in the Cabinet, if his party had come into power a short time before, and had actually been on the point of obtaining such a position in Lord Rockingham's first Administration, was not in the Cabinet at all when the Marquis came in again. No doubt the exchange of Bristol for Malton in itself helped to detract from his influence. After Christmas Burke joined heartily with Fox in his attacks on the ministry in general, and Lord Sandwich in particular. He again brought forward his plan of economical reform, and was valiantly supported by the young William Pitt and several other new lights. He himself wound up the debate with a magnificent oration which convinced every one, and left him in a minority of only forty-three.

An interesting and characteristic circumstance belongs to this period. A young Devonshire man, fired by love and ambition, came up to London in the hope of raising himself by his talents. He tried the publishers, and he tried the patrons of literature (Lord Shelburne among the number of the latter) in vain. Every door was shut; the youth was at the point of despair, when he thought of applying to Mr. Burke. Great was his joy when he heard that the great man would see him; and the result was beyond his hopes. Mr. Burke himself had gone through this kind of struggle himself, and never was lifted so far out of it as not to sympathise with those who reminded him of his former self. As he assisted Emin, as he helped the painter Barry, only more effectually he now undertook to assist Crabbe. Nothing could exceed his kindness; he had him constantly at his house; introduced him to publishers; advised and almost educated him; brought him down in vacation time to Beaconsfield, and at last got him ordained and settled in the Church. This was one of the many evidences of the springs of kindness and tenderness of feeling concealed under his stern, and sometimes harsh manner.

We cannot enter here on Mr. Burke's part in the Indian debates of 1781. It was in this year that his cousin William Burke returned on a mission from the King of Tanjore, and his animosity to Warren Hastings received a considerable increase. In common with the Opposition in general, he was excluded from Dundas's Secret Committee. Nor can we dwell on the tremendous attack upon Rodney for the plunder of St. Eustatius; it finally resulted in the Admiral's recall in the very hour of his great victory over De Grasse—a victory which melted even such an implacable as Burke himself, who said that if there was a bald spot on the admiral's head he would willingly cover



it with laurels. But we must hasten on. It was on the 25th of November the news reached the ministry of the surrender of Cornwallis and his army at Yorktown. The end had been long coming; but when the news reached Lord North on the Sunday morning before Parliament met, he exclaimed, "My God, it's all over!" and exhibited an agitation which he had never shown before. It was clear that his position was untenable in the approaching session; the king's favour could no longer save him; he was going out to his last fight. Resign, however, he would not, but determined to meet his enemies. Parliament met, and an amendment was moved on the Address. Fox spoke of the scaffold; Lord North defended himself with dignity, and said that even on the scaffold he could declare that the war had been just. Burke poured forth a torrent of eloquent reply; the passage in which he took up North's declaration of the justice of the war has been often quoted, and could scarcely be surpassed for its breathless vigour of expression. Discipline, however, still prevailed; the Government had a majority of ninety; but they could not agree among themselves whether to make peace or prosecute the war. Possibly but for this they might have weathered the storm; Lord George Germaine, the American Secretary, was in favour of fighting, and against him the Opposition concentrated their attack, as they had previously done on Sandwich. A motion that the war should be discontinued was defeated only by forty-one votes. Lord George, deserted by Lord North, and assailed by Dundas and Rigby, still held his position, and was able, so far as that went, to maintain himself against the Opposition, but was compelled, in consequence of the disagreement with his colleagues, to send in his resignation. The plan of the Opposition was to attack the ministers in detail; a new onslaught was prepared on Lord Sandwich; and Fox, who was to have led it, falling ill, it devolved upon Burke to press on the inquiry which had been granted. A vote of censure on the naval administration was only defeated by twenty-one. These lessening majorities were measuring the rapid fall of the ministry. A new assault, ably supported by Pitt, was made at the end of the month, and the majority was down to nineteen. Meanwhile Welbore Ellis, an ancient sinecurist, had taken the place of Lord George Germaine—a place for which the strongest man would have been insufficient. The new American Secretary was called up for the first time in that capacity to oppose a motion of General Conway for the discontinuance of the war. His flat and boastful speech was badly received by the House, and drew down a terrible punishment from Burke. He mocked at what Ellis had called his "confession of faith," called him Lord George Germaine in effigy, and compared the little minister, who had long been laid by in the lucrative sinecure of the treasurership of the navy, to a caterpillar that, having long reposed in the chrysalis state within the silken folds of his office, had at last burst its ligaments, expanded its wings, and fluttered forth the secretary of the hour; but the creature was a caterpillar still, though changed in appearance. The ridicule which he piled on Ellis's respectable antiquity overwhelmed the unfortunate minister, and did much damage to the ministry he represented. Fox and Pitt followed on the same side; in vain Lord North, all veteran as he was, threw himself into the breach against

such mighty stormers. The ministry came out of the division with a majority of ONE. But the ministry did not resign; it was necessary, therefore, to repeat the resolution, and this was done by Conway on the 27th of February. Burke did not speak in this debate, being kept in reserve for Ellis, who was afraid to speak. At half-past one in the morning the division was taken in a scene of immense excitement, and the Government was beaten by a majority of nineteen. Such a majority against the Government could scarcely be believed in after so many years; if the former divisions did not carry conviction there was no mistaking; and great was the exultation in the country at the prospect which it afforded of deliverance. But Lord North carried to perfection the characteristic of English valour of not knowing when he was beaten. Still he did not resign. The Address was presented to the king, and elicited but a vague reply. The House then declared that all who should advise the king to continue the war would be enemies of the country. It appeared, however, as if Lord North was waiting to be taken out by the collar; in gratitude, he said, to the king and people of England he would continue in office. Meanwhile the difficulty of finding ways and means delayed the production of the budget. On a fresh delay arising, Burke started up and volunteered a financial statement, in which he placed in array the immense losses of the country under Lord North's auspices. A direct vote of censure was at length determined upon; Burke had another opportunity of demolishing Welbore Ellis, a feat in which he took particular delight. Ministers not daring to meet the vote, boldly moved the order of the day. In this evasion they were supported by men who could not have upheld them directly, and had a majority of ten votes. Easter was approaching; after there could be no serious fighting; it was necessary, therefore, to continue the assault with vigour. On both sides strenuous exertions were made to secure a majority. In the next division on a vote of want of confidence, the ministry had but a margin of nine to hold on by. Lord North became alarmed; an impeachment would be the next step, and his enemies were daily becoming bolder and more undeniable, while his support lost heart. The king communicated with the Marquis of Rockingham, through Lord Chancellor Thurlow, as to the basis on which he would form a ministry. The marquis would make no concession of his principles, and the negotiation fell through. The king threatened to withdraw to Hanover; this contingency did not tend to re-assure his unpopular minister, and he pressed his majesty to accept his resignation. Not, however, until the very day that the vote of want of confidence was to be proposed again, was Lord North's resignation received. Lord North anticipated the debate by announcing that the ministry was "no more." The leading Oppositionists pronounced *eloges* decidedly uncomplimentary. Burke spoke among others. He was grave and stern; he warned his party against selfish ambitions, against the intoxication of victory in which its advantages are often lost; and in answer to an imputation of self-interest, declared that his social position did not entitle him to the expectation of being a minister. Was this wise? He scarcely thought, perhaps, in assuming this proudly humble tone, how shamefully he would be taken at his word.

George the Third, finding that the Marquis of Rockingham was still



intractable, sent for Lord Shelburne. He was a patriot of a very different type—one of those who look upon principles as subservient to the interests of party. This was the extreme opposite of Mr Burke, who transferred to Lord Shelburne a double portion of the animosity with which he had regarded Chatham. Burke was what men of less exalted integrity and less disinterested patriotism term impracticable; and for this reason, as the member of a party, he “stood alone;” he was among them, but not of them. In the current of mingling characters and motives, he was a drop borne in a stream with which it could not mingle. The good loved him, the wise revered, but the good and wise are not the party. He was formidable and useful, and therefore he was honoured and supported. He was the sail and helm, the master and pilot; what he advocated from principle suited his party from interest; but his abstractions, distinctions, references to aims remote and lofty, were trifling, wearisome, and overpowering to those to whom his measures were but stalking-horses, and maxims hoods and masks. So it was that, on the accession of the party to power, the supremacy of their leader was at an end. The guide and pioneer, under whose wisdom they had advanced, was felt to be *de trop* when the coveted position was gained; when their actual views—not the lofty ones they had professed—were about they hoped to be realised, he was no longer in any degree fitted for their purpose; from an effective engine of progress, he became an embarrassment and restraint. To place in the cabinet a leader so prompt, zealous, and masterful, would be to give him the real guidance of their policy. He was too peremptory, earnest, and intractable for any lesser part. So it was that when Lord Melbourne, who was in every respect his antithesis, coalesced, as his numerical weakness obliged him to do with the Marquis of Rockingham, and the Cabinet was formed in equal proportions of the followers of each, Burke was excluded from it, being relegated to the office of paymaster-general. If he had possessed aristocratic connexion, this exclusion of the genius of the party would have been impossible. It is a proof of which our faith is often sorely in need, that the age of flunkeyism is going by, that, under no circumstances, would it be possible now. Burke succeeded the unprincipled Rigby in the lucrative but minor office of paymaster. This, with a seat on the Privy Council, and the appointment of his son as deputy-paymaster, with a salary of £500, and his brother senior secretary to the Treasury, formed his share in the distribution of office. He assented to the arrangement with his wonted humility, a humility which formed one of the most beautiful characteristics of his mind, but rendered him liable to be set aside with facility in personal matters, whilst firm as a rock in all that concerned the public interests. It was perhaps thought that a poor man like Burke would gladly sacrifice the honours of a higher post for the enormous emoluments of the paymastership. But one of his first acts was to show that this was not the reason of his acquiescence. The economy which he had hitherto only preached he immediately began to put in practice to his own hindrance. The established emoluments of the office included the interest of a large portion of the public money lying in bank in the paymaster’s name. This perquisite amounted to something near £25,000 a-year. It had always belonged to Burke’s prede-

cessors in the office; it was his prescriptive right; none more in need of it than he; but he relinquished the whole, and contented himself with the salary of paymaster, which amounted to but £4000 a-year. This one act is sufficient answer to all the charges of low and mercenary motives which have been made against Burke. It is a guarantee for his integrity in other transactions on which our light is less clear. His virtue was indeed of the old Roman type, such as England loves not: it had no flaw in it. It made him particularly disagreeable to the Shelburne section of the Cabinet.

Shelburne occupied to Rockingham's party the relation that had been borne to it by Chatham, without Chatham's influence or popularity. His following was small; and it was of necessity that he embraced the Rockingham alliance. He was utterly opposed to recognising the independence of the United States, the principal point for which the Rockinghamites had battled before coming into office; and he was not in favour of Mr. Burke's plan of economical reform. Naturally he possessed the ear of George the Third, who feared and disliked Rockingham. There had been, immediately on the formation of the new Ministry, a manifestation that the King was disposed to treat Shelburne as the real chief. Without consulting the marquis, Mr. Dunning was raised to the peerage as Lord Ashburton.

Mr. Burke advised his patron to insist, as a balance, on Sir Fletcher Norton being created Baron Grantley. Much jealousy continued to exist between the followers of Rockingham and Shelburne, and Mr. Burke transferred to the latter all the dislike he had entertained for Chatham. Thus the Ministry came into being with the seeds of decline in its constitution. Ireland was to be its first difficulty; it was "the day of the volunteers," that one bright spot in Irish history. Lord Carlisle was Lord-Lieutenant, Mr. Eden chief Secretary. On the 16th of April 1782 Grattan was to renew the debate on the Rights of Ireland. The fall of Lord North's Government, of course, led the authorities at Dublin Castle to expect their own removal; and Mr. Eden, hearing a rumour that the Duke of Portland and Mr. Fitzpatrick were to succeed, came over in the hope of being able to embarrass the new Ministry. He refused to give them any information on the state of Irish affairs, but, like the unjust steward in the parable, feeling that his tenure of office being over, the moment for concession had arrived, proposed the repeal of the statute of George I., which was particularly obnoxious to the Irish patriots. Fox exposed his conduct, and defeated his manœuvre in a powerful speech, in which, however, he promised that immediate attention should be given to the Irish demands. Not such an advocate as Mr. Eden was now needed. The Duke of Portland, who went over as Lord-Lieutenant, was obliged to bow to the overpowering reason, eloquence, and physical force combined of Grattan and the volunteer army. Burke used all his influence with Fox and Lord Rockingham, and his influence prevailed. He had the delight of being a member of the Government which proposed the repeal of the offensive statute, and said, in his speech on the motion for its repeal on the 17th of May,—“It is not on this day, when there is no difference of opinion, that I will rise to fight the battle of Ireland. Her cause is nearest my heart. Nothing gave me so much satisfaction when I was first



honoured with a seat in this house, as the hope that I might, in some way or other, be of service to the country that gave me birth. I have always thought myself that, if such an insignificant member as I am would ever be so fortunate as to render an essential service to England, and my Sovereign and Parliament were going to reward me, I should say to them, 'Do something for Ireland, do something for my country, and I shall be over-rewarded.'" Burke's eminent part in bringing about the bloodless concession of their demands was not sufficiently recognised by his countrymen. Ireland being pacified, he was soon grappling new subjects; carrying on the investigation into the conduct of Sir Elijah Impey which moved parallel to the investigations of the Committee on Warren Hastings; and bringing to the front his great scheme of economical reform. With respect to the latter, Burke strongly opposed its being carried out in an underhand way; and, finally, it was agreed that the king himself should recommend it to the attention of Parliament. With the modification inseparable from compromises, the scheme originated by Burke was, to his great joy, successfully carried through Parliament, and effected a saving to the nation of £72,000 a-year. He also succeeded in carrying through the Civil Lists Bill, and one for regulating his own office. This was the brief moment of complete success in his political life; but an event happened in the middle of the year which hopelessly clouded his prospects—it was the death of his noble patron, Lord Rockingham. Many pecuniary transactions, nominally in the nature of loans, but really the well-earned wages of a trusty political henchman, had passed between the marquis and his former secretary. One of the last acts of the Marquis of Rockingham was to add a codicil to his will cancelling any debt of which memoranda might be found among his papers. Mr. Burke had followed his patron through the long shadow of opposition, which to the latter was only ease from the cares of office, but to the commoner meant poverty—abnegation of the rich spoils both in honour and emolument of public life. The marquis had felt bound, therefore, to assist in placing Mr. Burke at ease in regard to money matters, and had made him, in 1767, a loan of £10,000, and various lesser advances on subsequent occasions. Burke, it has been said, expected, and would probably have received, a legacy from the Marquis of Rockingham, had he not appeared at that time beyond the need of it, in secure possession of a lucrative office. But already Fox and Shelburne had been opposed to each other in the Cabinet, and, on the death of Rockingham, a rupture became inevitable. Shelburne was appointed Prime Minister, and Fox withdrew from the Ministry, followed by Burke and Lord John Cavendish. Burke had advised his friends to hold on until Parliament met, when the nation, not the king, would arbitrate between the discordant sections of the Ministry. But Fox could not endure the humiliation of being in the meanwhile eclipsed in the Cabinet, and Burke withdrew with his friends. His tenure of office had lasted only three months, and it was not unnatural that, in leaving it, he was anxious to make some provision for his son Richard. On the strength of memoranda found in the journals of Horace Walpole, Burke is said to have endeavoured to make an arrangement by which his son should receive, instead of the office of deputy-paymaster, which he was, of course, obliged to

resign, the sinecure appointment of the clerkship of the Pells, worth £1000 a-year.\* But even if the proposal had not been, as we feel sure it has been, maliciously misrepresented, we cannot see that it leaves any stain on the official purity of Mr. Burke. The office had been spared by his economical Reform Bill, in conformity with the terms of the compromise agreed upon; and if he made an effort to obtain it for his son from the section of his party that remained in power, it was a perfectly justifiable and legitimate transaction. He was himself obliged to resign by private political relations; but there was no reason why his son should cease to serve the king under a Whig Government.

Circumstances, however, were leading to new combinations, and Burke was soon to return to the pay-office. Gibraltar had been saved; the Bourbons were not hopeful of a victorious termination of the war; peace was about to be concluded; the 17th of February 1783, was the day fixed for consideration of the preliminaries. Shelburne felt insecure, and would have been glad to gain over North and his followers; but Pitt would not sit with them. The other ministers despised the once powerful leader of the Tories, and required his unconditional surrender, and would then have allowed him to hold on to the skirts of the Cabinet, of which he was not to be a member. It was not unnatural that he should throw himself into the arms of Fox's Opposition. Pitt, sent from the king, endeavoured in vain to re-enlist Fox. The opposition Tories and opposition Whigs coalesced, and drove out their common enemy.

In the address on the peace, Shelburne was defeated by a majority of sixteen. The preliminary treaties were censured on the 21st, the defeat was again complete. For five weeks, while the king could not make up his mind, the interregnum continued. On the 2d of April the Coalition entered office; Portland, Prime Minister; Fox and North Secretaries of State. Burke returned to the pay-office, into which there was less excuse than before for thrusting him, as he had himself despoiled it of its emoluments. A seat in the Cabinet was not offered him, and he was the last man to claim it—as he said years after, “It is my friends who must discover the rank I hold in Parliament. I never shall explain.” He was above the littleness of refusing what was offered because the offer was not great enough. However, he possessed considerable influence with the Duke of Portland—was even said to be Prime Minister through this peer, who had been wittily described by Horace Walpole as having lived shut up in ducal dudgeon behind the walls of Burlington House, with half a dozen toad-eaters, and to have plunged his immense property in encumbrances without an apparent expenditure of £2000 a-year. Burke, however, considered him honest and sincere, and perhaps would have been willing to stand in the same relationship to him as he had borne to Rockingham, who had the same recommendations, and an almost equal need for the brains of the great Irishman.

But the coalition placed him in a false position, and he felt it keenly. In a debate on Pitt's motion for parliamentary reform, when he rose to

\* See “Moore's Diary,” vol. iv. p. 218, and “Memorials and Correspondence of Fox,” vol. i. p. 450.



speak there was such a noise of members going out, that he sat down indignantly. Had his conscience been at ease, he was the last man to be silenced. He had laid himself open to his numerous enemies, who unhesitatingly plunged in their venomous swords; and a, perhaps unadvised, act of mercy to two clerks in his office, Bembridge and Powell, who had been removed by Barré for peculation, but restored by Burke until the charge should be proved, put him still more in their power. The House of Commons was indignant; the most painful construction was put upon his conduct, and the attack upon him was renewed again and again. He was obliged at length to acquiesce in their dismissal. Powell, reduced to despair, cut his throat a few days after. Bembridge was convicted of the peculation of which he had been accused; but the law having been called in to decide, Burke had thought it just to defer the heaviest part of their punishment until their guilt had been established. Between him and Pitt there arose a bitter opposition. Pitt lost no opportunity of assailing him. He accused him of privately altering clauses in the bill, amending his own Pay Office Act. There was a fierce tussle, but it was proved that the clauses had been put in so low a tone as not to be heard.

Mr. Burke was now entering upon the most remarkable portion of his public career; the impeachment of the Indian Viceroy was drawing near. His discharge of the office of prosecutor in so great a suit seems to us, who look back upon it all, a gloomy, but not unworthy climax, to all his public life that had gone before. We should have a happier recollection of Burke if he had not linked his memory with the prosecution of Warren Hastings, but some grandeur would be lost. The ninth and tenth Reports of the Committee on the Administration of Justice in India were from his pen. In these reports part of the charges were developed which afterwards formed the impeachment. What was his first object, however, was the reformation of India, and it was by him that Fox's India Bill was drawn up. Pitt demanded a Radical Bill; this was radical beyond what he had expected. It in fact abolished all the charters of the Company, giving the political administration up to a Board of eight commissioners, who were to hold their offices for four years, the Crown nominating successors, and the proprietors nominating an inferior Board of the same number to look after their commercial interests. There was a supplementary Bill abolishing abuses and righting wrongs. The measure was violently opposed, but was carried without a division on the first reading. The second was carried by a hundred and nine. It was on the motion for going into committee that Burke made his great speech. Wraxall, who had just deserted to the other side, said it was the greatest he had ever heard in parliament. The Bill passed through its other stages with large majorities, but the arguments of Pitt and Jenkinson, that it would make ministers independent of the king, alarmed George the Third. All possible influence was brought to bear on the House of Lords, and on the 17th of December the India Bill was thrown out, and the day after the Coalition Ministry was dismissed, and Pitt came into power. Thus ended Burke's official life, which consisted of two periods of three months and eight months in the Pay Office.

The new ministry for a while sat in spite of parliament; but the

Coalition lost coherence in opposition. Pitt's popularity grew in the country and in the House; the strength of his opponents diminished. Burke was disheartened, and spoke seldom. When the general election came on, he himself was re-elected, but his party was completely beaten. At this time, however, a gleam of sunshine amid the gloom of the political situation was his installation as Lord Rector of Glasgow University. When he rose to return thanks, the great orator faltered, and said that he had never before addressed so learned an assembly; however, notwithstanding the hesitation so complimentary to the Scotch university, he managed to make an excellent speech. Shortly after the meeting of parliament, Burke drew up, and when it was negatived by the House, published his "Vindication of the late House of Commons." He was not supported by Fox, and a coldness which had already begun received a decided increase. Burke's separation from his party may be said to have commenced from this time. In the late parliament he had been prescriptively respected and admired; his intellectual supremacy was a tradition of the House; but the new members treated him with open and noisy disrespect. His "Representation to the King," more lengthy than anything that had ever been put upon the journals of the House before, was greeted with a rude burst of laughter; the young and chivalrous Windham alone, who had just entered parliament, and was destined, in years to come of disparagement and failure, to be his one faithful disciple and friend, could be found to second its adoption; it was negatived contemptuously without a division. On every occasion that Burke addressed the House he was made to feel that his position was altered; his vehemence was ridiculed, and he was sincerely believed to be mad by many of the unfledged politicians of the House. Pitt's India Bill, which gave increased power to the Board of Control, he considered thoroughly truckling and bad; and the violence of his opposition upon a matter which only concerned the myriads of India, and had nothing to do with the little domestic politics of England, was regarded by the Philistine vestrymen of the British Parliament as undeniable proof of mania. They could not enter into his feelings, or rise to his idea; it was the old story of Paul and Festus. Such an audience, combined with intense and solemn earnestness and perpetual disappointment, increased the natural infirmity of his temper. He was "always a fighter," as Mr. Browning described himself; but with genius to be a great victor over wrong and political evil, he was always vanquished by fate; and if the cause triumphed his enemies were crowned, and snatched the fruits of victory. The prosecution of Warren Hastings, in which he spent these last years of his political life, was now soon about to commence. Burke denounced him to the new House in terms which excited loud laughter; having compared the late ruler of India to a highwayman, he thus apostrophised Newgate, "Forgive me, O Newgate, if I have thus dishonoured thy inhabitants by an odious comparison; thy highwayman who may have robbed one person on the highway is not to be compared with him who has plundered millions, and made them feel all the calamities of famine; thy murderer who may have deprived one individual of life would be disgraced by any comparison with him who has exterminated the inhabitants of a whole kingdom; thy housebreaker is a harmless character when compared



with him who has destroyed the habitations of millions, and left whole provinces without inhabitants." We quote this as a specimen of the exaggeration into which Burke was sometimes led by ineffectual rage, when subjects upon which he himself felt most deeply were treated with brainless and heartless levity. It appeared unlikely at this time that the Opposition would go beyond denunciation. The return of Sir Elijah Impey was announced by Pitt with something like a challenge: but it was not accepted, owing to the certainty of a miscarriage of justice: and Hastings would probably have enjoyed similar immunity but for an injudicious advocate, in the person of his agent Major Scott, who stung Burke into attempting what it had been decided was hopeless. Another enemy of Hastings, whom he had defeated and driven from India, now appeared in the House of Commons; and his great personal knowledge rendered him an invaluable ally to Burke. This was Sir Philip Francis, the redoubtable Junius himself. But neither the personal hatred of Francis or the diviner anger of Burke seemed likely to bring the Indian Government to justice. Hastings was received at Court with every mark of favour. With the countenance of the king and queen, with the majority on his side in parliament, the Prime Minister benevolently neutral, the Whig party quiescent, and the nation favourable, nothing could possibly seem more secure than his position. He fancied that he could crush his vindictive enemies in England with as much ease as he had trampled upon his foes in the far off Government of Hindostan; but he little knew that in coming to England in June he had put himself within the reach of a giant. The demand for papers regarding Oude was flatly refused by Pitt; and it was on this occasion that Burke, irritated by the crackling laughter of Englishmen, who thought that the world was bounded by the shores of England, laying his hand on the Indian Reports, vowed to avenge India. And yet at the end of the session of 1784 there appeared no prospect of obtaining a trial. Burke returned to Beaconsfield much downcast, but the pleasures of his country home soon restored his spirits. It may be well to remind the reader, as a preparation for the impeachment of Hastings, and the relentless but just hatred with which Burke pursued the great criminal, that in private life he was all gentleness and charity; that for miles around he was looked up to by the peasantry as a friend and benefactor; that to the utmost of his means he relieved their wants, prescribing for their ailments, and dispensing simple remedies. With the poor he was their country doctor; with children he was a child; with his friends the most amiable and pleasing of men. But in public life he was no longer a man—he was the Avenging Angel. At the meeting of parliament in January 1785, an amendment on the Address with regard to the affairs of India was defeated by an overwhelming majority. But this majority was reduced to sixty-nine on Fox's motion with regard to the Nabob of Arcot's debts, on which Burke made a speech wonderful in grasp of facts and eloquence, but marred by the delivery. The Nabob of Arcot had been the tool of the English adventurers, who preyed upon the living body of India; he had incurred enormous debts to them for small loans, the payment being guaranteed by Government, and made out of the revenue of the Carnatic; and had been authorised as a return to exact from the

King of Tanjore immense sums which he did not owe! Atkinson and Bentfield were two of the principal Nabobs enriched by these transactions. We cannot enter at length into any of the charges against Hastings, but must endeavour briefly to trace Mr. Burke's connection with that greatest of State trials. First, however, we may say that, while engaged in this gigantic task, he was just as active as ever in other political matters. In April he contributed to the defeat of Pitt's third and last attempt at parliamentary reform—feeling, as he ever did with regard to this subject, that with infidel democracy rising on every side, it was not the time to expose the English Constitution to change. He was equally opposed to the minister's policy for Ireland. Pitt's proposals were based on the principles of reciprocity, and what showed that they were not thoroughly unfair was, that they gave great offence to the English manufacturers. Indeed, as they were introduced in the Irish parliament, they would have been highly beneficial; but they were, unfortunately, modified by the English Cabinet to preserve the commercial supremacy. Burke warned the Tories against repeating the error made with reference to America, and endeavouring to make Ireland a source of revenue for the relief of the English tax-payer. To this Pitt replied that no such analogy existed, and alluding to Burke's Irish origin, hoped that his words would produce no evil effects in Ireland among his excitable countrymen.

It was decided in April that Hastings should be heard at the bar of the House. His defence occupied three days. It was rather arrogant in its tone, and wore out the patience of the House by its length. However, the majority was prepared, whatever it might be, to deem it satisfactory; and when Burke, in pursuance of his plan of taking the opinion of the House on each charge separate, brought forward the extirpation of the Rohillas, which had already been condemned, on the motion of a member of the ministry he was defeated, after a long debate, by two to one. Lapse of time and ministerial condonation were pleaded, but still it was too evident that justice was not to be obtained. Burke was almost inclined to give over the attempt, but to save appearances, resolved to bring forward two or three more charges. It was rumoured that Hastings was about to be raised to the peerage; the efforts of his enemies seemed on the point of falling to the ground; the old complaint seemed to be verified again of the wicked being in great prosperity. On June 13 Fox brought forward the second charge, relating to the enormous fine levied on Cheyt Singh, rajah of Benares. Pitt admitted that the fine was too heavy, though, after the revolution at Benares, he thought the rajah's deposition was justifiable; but to the unutterable consternation of his own side of the house, and the amazement of the Opposition, he declared that he would vote that there was ground for grave accusation. The ministerialists did not know how to vote; Scott's senses almost forsook him; and the motion was carried by a majority of forty. It is impossible to explain the cause of this sudden resolution of the minister. Some said that he was jealous of the increasing favour which was shown Hastings at Court, and that he was determined to prevent his being placed upon the India Board; but we are inclined to think that he was one whose conscience sometimes compelled him to act contrary to his inclinations, contrary even



to the interests of his party, and that this was an instance. The rest of the charges were postponed to next meeting of Parliament, and Burke employed the recess in mastering the subject, and working through the papers which he had with such difficulty procured from Leadenhall Street. On the resumption of the charges, the next, relating to the Begums of Oude, was brought forward by a new ally, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. His speech carried all opposition before it; and the other charges were brought forward with equal success. Hastings' friends argued that his great services should be regarded as a set off to his errors; but he himself rejected this plea, and declared that he would be tried on the merits. Burke, through all these debates, was the prompter of his party. His temper was often sorely tried, and was scarcely equal to the severe strain that was put upon it—the insolence of Major Scott being almost beyond sufferance. His abuse, however, was deprived of its value by a ludicrous exposure in the *Morning Herald*, the editor of which published an account of Scott's payments for inserting abusive articles:—

Item— For attacking Mr. Burke's veracity,	.	.	5s. 6d.
Accusing Mr. Burke of inconsistency,	.	.	9s. 0d.
Attempting to ridicule Mr. Burke,	.	.	5s. 6d.
etc.			

A committee was formed to prepare the articles of impeachment, and on the 10th of May the impeachment was formally moved and carried without a division. Accompanied by a majority of the House, Burke proceeded to the bar of the House of Lords, and impeached Warren Hastings. The lumbering car of High Justice was now fairly set in motion, and it was decided that next year the trial should commence. In the interval, Burke, who had not been there for twenty years, paid his last visit to Ireland; spent a few days with Lord Charlemont at Marino; brought his son Richard down to Ballitore still flourishing in the third generation; and then went on to the other scenes of his childhood, the Blackwater flowing as of old, and the still green meadows of Coolbawn.

At length the great trial, for which Burke had been making Herculean preparations for the last five years, was taken up on the 13th of February 1788. Two days were spent in reading the articles of impeachment and the answers of Mr. Hastings. On the third Burke opened the case to a crowded House. For four days he continued a statement of unparalleled power and effect; whether from the force of representation and reason, the command of the subject, the novel aspect in which he presented questions so trite and beaten, or the profound interest of the facts themselves, never perhaps was such an audience so bound by the commanding mastery of an orator. Some, indeed, of the statements he made on the 18th of February were of a nature to convulse the feelings of the House with horror. Mr. Burke was compelled by his own emotion to pause and drop his head upon his hands, and remain for some moments unable to articulate; nor did he proceed for many minutes after, before he was so indisposed that it was necessary to adjourn till the next day. Probably, considering the occasion, the scene in Westminster Hall, and the gigantic nature of the trial, there never was, historically, a greater speech—scarcely ever a

more effective. For four days the immense audience listened with deepening interest and excitement to

“That great voice which, rising, brought  
Red wrath to faces pale with thought,  
And falling, fell with showers of tears.”

It was on the third day of his speech that Mrs. Siddons and some other ladies fainted at the horrible narrations of the orator. On the 19th he closed his statement with a solemn and impressive description of the cause, the accusers, and the court, and ended by charging Mr. Hastings with abuse of public trust—with dishonouring the character of England—subverting the laws, rights, and liberties of India—of destroying the properties of the inhabitants, desolating their country, and of enormous cruelties and tyrannies inflicted on persons of every rank and sex. On the 21st of April the business of the trial was resumed, and Mr. Burke brought on his first separate charge, which was that of bribery. Thus the long and weary struggle was fairly commenced, which was destined to be protracted over six years. We cannot enter upon the reflections which this trial would naturally suggest; we would only say that Mr. Burke must be entirely acquitted of having been actuated by private malice—a sentiment of which he was incapable. The impeachment proceeded from the House of Commons—the responsibility of the undertaking rested upon it. There was certainly ample *prima facie* ground for inquiry; and had it been conducted as a State trial ought to have been, and not by the rules and precedents of inferior courts, there can be little doubt that a different verdict would have been arrived at by the House of Lords.

During the course of this long trial, of which Burke, Fox, and Sheridan were the principal managers, there was much to try the temper of Burke, who was constantly pitted against Law upon legal technicalities, in which he was scarcely a match for the clever and well-informed barrister. His relations with the other managers also underwent a painful change. Charles James Fox was his political pupil; he had known and loved him from boyhood, and his affection had been warmly returned. Sheridan he had helped to bring forward in the political world, but the time was coming when the friends were to meet in the manager's box as bitter foes, only speaking to one another in cold and formal tones when the business of the trial demanded it. The origin of this breach was the strong part Burke took against the French Revolution. Fox and the rest of the Whig party looked upon the Revolution as the great dawn of liberty; they bitterly resented, therefore, those speeches and writings of Burke in which he attacked it with his accustomed vehemence, of course tending to discredit them as its supporters, and to injure their chances of office.

“Reflections on the French Revolution” was perhaps the most brilliant of all his works, and certainly made the greatest sensation. Francis, to whom he sent the manuscript, and who felt how it would injure him with the party, strongly advised him not to publish it; but nothing could dissuade him from doing so. Its publication was greeted by the execrations of his friends and the praises of his enemies. George the Third had always regarded him with aversion, as one of the un-



compromising Rockinghamites; one of the friends and supporters of a rebellious son. But the *Reflections* quite changed his feelings to the author. To all his courtiers he said of this book, "It will do you good—do you good. It is a book that every gentleman ought to read." His favourites were all presented with handsomely bound copies. Louis XVI. in his confinement translated the whole work; nearly all the crowned heads of Europe sent him their congratulations. Perhaps not the least gratifying reward was the degree of LL.D. conferred upon him by the University of Dublin. His name became widely known on the continent; he was always looked up to as a friend and adviser by the royal family of France. We should gladly quote, if space permitted it, Mr. Mackintosh's hostile eulogium on the *Reflections* in his *Defence of the French Revolution*—"We can scarcely," he said, "praise or blame it too much."

It was really impossible, having taken up a position so directly at variance with his party, unless he had retired from politics altogether, that a breach could have been long avoided. The introduction of the Quebec Bill was the first occasion upon which this opposition assumed an irreconcilable character. Fox made its introduction the peg upon which to hang a long disquisition in praise of the Revolution. It was a challenge to Burke to reply; he had in private declared his intention of doing so, at all risks, if the subject should be introduced, and he kept his promise. Silence would have been interpreted as defeat to himself and to the great cause of which he was the leading champion. He was committed to speak, since Fox had, in the previous debate (April 21), imported the subject into the discussion. But he promised to avoid casting imputations upon his friend, and as he walked down to the House on his arm, sketched the plan of his speech. It was soon, however, interrupted by a preconcerted plan. Cheered by the ministerial side of the House, and interrupted by incessant calls to order upon his own side, he for some time weathered the storm; but at last, as the clamours increased, Lord Sheffield moved that dissertations on the French constitution were disorderly, and Mr. Fox seconded the motion in a speech of some length. Pitt endeavoured to induce some of the mutual friends of Burke and Fox to interfere, but all felt the delicacy and inutility of such an attempt. Things could not, however, have been made worse than they turned out. Fox, launching out into praises of the French Revolution, taunted Burke with want of information, and threatened to leave the House if he should continue his argument. Burke replied with as much temper as could be expected, declaring, however, that he was willing to meet Fox "hand to hand and foot to foot" on the subject in controversy, but that he had entertained no design of affixing to him any stigma. In the course of his speech an unfortunate incident occurred. Fox went into the lobby to procure an orange, but a number of his party supposing that he was leaving in fulfilment of his threat, rose and followed him. They soon, however, returned with their leader, feeling no doubt extremely foolish; but the mistake aroused Burke's hitherto subdued anger. He said "it certainly was indiscreet at his time of life to provoke enmity, or to give his friends occasion to desert him; yet if his firm and steady adherence to the British Constitution placed him in such a dilemma, he would

risk all." Mr. Fox here whispered that there was no loss of friendship. Burke went on to say that he was sorry there was. "He knew the price of his conduct—he had done his duty at the price of his friend—their friendship was at an end." Fox rose to reply; he appeared to labour under the most violent agitation; the tears streamed down his face, and it was some minutes before he could proceed. The House was greatly moved; but Fox's speech was not conciliatory in its matter, although accompanied by kindly expressions and hopes that time would heal the quarrel. It failed to pacify Burke, who said that a new charge had been brought against him—that of inconsistency—to prove which, light jests and unweighed words used in private conversation had been brought up in evidence. The discussion was shortly after renewed. Burke complained of the attacks which had in the meantime been made upon him in the newspapers. Fox replied in a tone of sarcasm; and, among other wounding insinuations, hinted that the right honourable gentleman's vanity misled him to attach an undue importance to the personal topics he had brought before the House. The reply to this consisted of several strong retorts; and the result was to render final Burke's separation from his party. He had walked across the house, and sat down on the front ministerial bench between Pitt and Dundas; and in truth he had no longer a choice; the old order had changed; his own party had, as he said, passed away where he should shortly follow; he had only acted in temporary alliance with their successors, but had met from them nothing but distrust and insult. For the remainder of his life, and even after his death, he was made the mark of a low hostility; and his sensitive temperament made his enemies more persevering in their attacks. The impeachment of Hastings still brought the hostile managers together. On the meeting of the new parliament in 1790, the question arose whether the dissolution had terminated the proceedings. Burke moved for a committee on the question; it was decided that the trial should proceed; but on this occasion he broke off his friendship with Erskine, as he had already done with Fox, and still earlier with Sheridan. It was at this time that he wrote his Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs—an essay of which George the Third expressed his warm admiration. The nature of the Appeal may be inferred from its title. In the session of 1790 Fox brought forward the subject of parliamentary reform; and Burke, who felt that it was the most inopportune time conceivable for tampering with the Constitution, widened the breach with the Opposition by differing from them on this subject also, as in the previous session he had differed on the repeal of the tests in behalf of dissenters. He had been perfectly willing to substitute a declaration of belief in God, and a promise not to assail the Establishment for the sacramental test. And now events happened which confirmed all Burke's prophecies about the Revolution; the bloodshed in France—the horrible September massacres—had the most intense effect upon his mind. He had held many communications with the unhappy king and queen; the French nobles and emigrés had come in crowds to his levees to hear the prophet cursing their enemies. He now became a sort of Peter the Hermit to the Crusade against the Revolution. His anti-Jacobin speeches in 1792, in which he preached war upon the gory monster



that had issued out to terrify, and ultimately to devastate Europe, were much applauded, and strengthened the hands of the ministry. When the Alien Bill was under discussion, Burke electrified the House by producing a dagger which he said was a specimen of those with which the revolutionary agents were being armed. The jokes, interpolations, and laughter with which this artifice is said to have been greeted, are pure fictions; the effect was what the orator intended. When two months after Sheridan made an ironical motion for an inquiry into the existence of seditious practices, and sneered at "the dagger scene," as he called it, Burke produced a letter from a Birmingham manufacturer stating that 11,000 daggers had been ordered, and 4000 actually supplied. Meanwhile the trial of Hastings was lengthened out by the cumbersome forms of parliament, and seemed never to be coming to an end. Not that the time actually taken up was inordinate—no more than a hundred days in all; but by dissolutions and delays they were scattered over six years. A painful scene arose on one of the examinations, when the Archbishop of York (Dr Markham) compared Burke to Marat and Robespierre. Burke, who had himself been censured on a former occasion for saying that Hastings had murdered Nuncomar, acted with great dignity, and prevented any extreme proceedings from being adopted by the House of Commons to punish the insult to their manager. Hastings was now extremely anxious to bring the trial to a conclusion. He had no fear as to the result, and was weary of the ordeal. His advocates, therefore, suddenly closed the defence, and the managers, who were not prepared to reply, had great difficulty in procuring time. At length, however, the conclusion of the trial was deferred to the next session; and the managers separated to prepare for the last great act, more hostile to each other than ever. Fox opposed the war, and had become extremely unpopular in consequence; and when the Whig Club declared its confidence in him, Burke considered this to be equivalent to a vote of want of confidence in himself. He wrote his *Observations on the Conduct of the Minority* for the private perusal of the Duke of Portland, as leader of the Whig party; and this was surreptitiously published by the person he employed as his copyist under the title of "Fifty-four Heads of Impeachment of the Right Honourable Charles James Fox." This attack would probably have been written in a more charitable spirit had it been intended for the perusal of the public. What is said to a friend in private, without appearing too strong, assumes a much darker meaning when said openly to the world. The *Observations* were certainly unjust to Mr. Fox; but their injustice may easily be excused.

When Burke was not speaking he was writing. "Remarks on the Policy of the Allies" was another essay from his pen at this time. He strongly disapproved of the way in which the war was being carried on; the allies were pursuing their own selfish ends, slicing off corners of French territory, and capturing coveted French towns, instead of marching to Paris and crushing out the Revolution. The Comte d'Artois wrote to Burke asking him to intercede for some help from the English Government to enable him to put himself at the head of the Vendéans. Burke could only reply that he had no more influence than the poorest clerk in the Government offices; his warnings

were without avail, La Vendee was shortly after crushed, and the Duke of York's campaign terminated ingloriously. Burke was now weary of parliament; he had separated from his party; he had broken with his old friends; he could not amalgamate with the ministerialists; there was nothing to delay the retirement which he meditated but the conclusion of the great trial. It came at last.

With the commencement of the session (1794) new delays had arisen. Burke moved for a committee to inquire into the causes of the duration of the trial, and the report which he himself drew up showed immense learning and deep insight into the principles of law. Thurlow, many of whose decisions it exposed, was greatly incensed, and alluded to it as the work of some anonymous pamphleteer. Burke, in a dignified speech, rebuked this treatment by the representative of the House of Lords of a House of Commons' Report. On the 28th of May Burke began his reply on the evidence, and it occupied nine days in delivery. This extraordinary effort, which showed all his powers to be undiminished, brought to a conclusion the fourteen years' struggle which he had undertaken for justice to India, and his twenty-eight years of parliamentary life. His imagination, his reason, the flash of oratorical genius, were never more apparent than in this great summing-up, which was worthy to be the capital of such a parliamentary life. The peroration, in point of eloquence and taste, was the purest and best sculptured piece of oratory he had ever delivered. Yet for months the decision was to be deferred; but the managers had done their work. On the 20th of June Pitt moved a vote of thanks. He truly said that whatever the result might be, this impeachment would be a warning to English governors in all time to come. Hastings' friends who attacked Burke, particularly for the insulting epithets he had applied to the accused in his last speech, divided on the motion, and it was carried in the affirmative by 55 to 21. Addington conveyed the thanks in a short and dignified speech, which was heard by Burke with deep emotion. When Pitt again moved that Addington's speech should be printed, in a few words the leading manager thanked the House for its expression, and excused his own language, saying it had been much misrepresented. They were the last words he spoke in the House. The next day he accepted the Chiltern hundreds, and retired from the disappointments, the labours, and mortifications of the political battlefield to the peaceful country life of his home at Beaconsfield. Immediately after the old Whigs joined the ministry. Burke, if he had chosen to remain, might have returned to place; but he did not regret his retirement. His only ambition now was for his son Richard, who was to take his father's seat at Malton, and in a few months to accompany Lord Fitzwilliam to Ireland in the position of Chief Secretary. The young man, who had for some time acted as legal counsel to the Irish Roman Catholics, was now to be employed to carry out his long-cherished plans of religious toleration. A dinner was given in London to celebrate his return for the borough that his father had so long illustriously filled; all was joy and triumph; but the next day the chest disease, which had lain so long concealed, suddenly revealed itself in the most desperate form. He suffered violent pain, and vomited blood. By the advice of Dr. Brocklesby he was at once removed for



change of air to Cromwell House, Brompton; but all efforts to arrest the fearful rapidity of the disease were in vain; and it was necessary at last to inform Mr. Burke of his son's almost hopeless condition. His grief was terrible beyond consolation; he neither slept nor ate; the only hope he expressed for the young man was in "his mother's prayers." On the 2nd of August more favourable symptoms appeared; his voice returned, and he could retain food. But they were deceptive. The cries of his father and mother reached his chamber as he lay; he rose and dressed himself carefully, and was supported down by the butler and housekeeper. He stayed with his parents for a while, endeavouring to soothe their agony. He said that he felt a mysterious change approaching, and entreated his father to speak to him; but the great orator was speechless—he could not trust his voice. It was the 30th of October; the autumn breeze moved the trees outside gently and solemnly. Richard, with his face full of that unearthly beauty which has been preserved in Sir Joshua Reynold's portrait of him, twice repeated the lines of Milton from Adam's hymn—

"His praise ye winds that from four quarters blow,  
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,  
With every plant in sign of worship wave—"

and expired peacefully in his father's arms. It would be too distressing to dwell on Burke's grief; all his hopes had been bound up in this son, who was, according to those who knew him best, and had penetrated his reserve, full of quiet depths of character and genius. Burke spoke of himself as dead. He wrote his will, the opening sentences of which we cannot forbear transcribing:—"If my dear son and friend had survived me, my will would have been unnecessary; but as it has pleased God to call him to himself before his father, my duty calls upon me to make such a distribution of my worldly goods as seems to my best judgment most equitable and reasonable. Therefore I, Edmund Burke, late of the parish of St. James's, Westminster, though suffering from sore and inexpressible affliction, being of sound body and disposing mind, do make my last will and testament in manner following:—First, according to the ancient, good, and laudable custom, of which my heart and understanding recognise the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for his mercy through the only merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire, if I should die in any place very convenient for its transport (but not otherwise), to be buried in the church at Beaconsfield near to the bodies of my dearest brother and dearest son, in all humility praying that, as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have a part in the resurrection of the just." By this will he left all to his wife, except a legacy of £1000 to his niece Mary Haviland. The most universal sympathy was felt for the bereaved statesman; he received the kindest letters from Grattan, Lord Fitzwilliam, the Comte d'Artois, his faithful friend Windham, and all whose friendship was best worth having and most consoling, of those among whom he had mixed. George III. felt it was a time for substantial recognition of Burke's services to the state, and Pitt wrote to inform him that "a pension of £1200 a year was to be paid for his own and his wife's life out of the civil lists, and that it was his intention to



apply to Parliament to grant an annuity more proportioned to the retired statesman's merits." This promise, however, was never fulfilled, though the pension was made up to £2500. Burke's accepting this pension has actually been represented by his enemies as a corrupt transaction, while no imputation was ever cast upon such men as Barre and Dunning, who were pensioned for services incomparably less; or upon the Earl of Chatham, who had not saved the country, as Burke had done, hundreds of thousands. Fox's debts might be paid; Pitt held great sinecures; but Burke has been singled out for abuse as the Great Pensioner.

But little remains to be told. On the 23d of April 1795, he was present at the last great scene of the impeachment, when twenty-three peers voted for acquittal, and six—among whom, strange to say, was Lord Thurlow—voted "Guilty." The remaining two years of Burke's life were spent in retirement, but not in idleness. An absurd attack by the Duke of Norfolk upon his "Reflections on the French Revolution," called out a defence of that work. "Thoughts and Details on Scarcity" were written on the proposal to make the farmers pay higher wages to their labourers, and showed Burke to be an able and sound economist. His "Letters on a Regicide Peace" proved his mind, which his enemies reported was going, to be as brilliant and unclouded as ever; the "Letter to a Noble Lord" was written on the occasion of the Duke of Bedford and Lord Lauderdale attacking his pension in the House of Lords. This attack had drawn out an able, manly, and crushing reply from Lord George Grenville, and Burke himself was still able to prove that the lion was not so dead that the asses might fling out their heels at him with impunity. Never, indeed, had the reward of public service been more honourably deserved; for the triumphs of Trafalgar or the crowning glories of Waterloo were not more decisive in their result than the able, laborious, and persevering exertions of pen and tongue which, under the mercy of Providence, arrested and repelled from the shores of Great Britain the furious waves of infidelity, anarchy, and civil ruin.

Mr Burke's retirement was devoted also to good works of a practical nature. In time of pressure he erected a mill in the neighbourhood for the benefit of the poor; he established and superintended a school for emigrant children. In those, and in many other works of love and kindness, the evening shadows of life closed around the great statesman. His daily study was in the great Book of Comfort; and without pain, and surrounded by affectionate friends, he at last, without uneasiness, saw his end approaching. On the 7th of July 1797 he prepared for death, expressing firm confidence in the sacrifice of his Redeemer, and praying to be forgiven by God and man for those faults of temper of which he felt himself to have been guilty. The next day he spoke long of the great transactions in which his public life had been spent; and as he was being carried for a change from one room into another, he expired in the arms of his relative, Mr. Nagle. He was buried next his son in Beaconsfield Church. Mr. Fox had, in the interval before his interment, proposed a public funeral in Westminster Abbey, but it was felt that his own wish should be complied with. The Abbey never indeed had been, or will be, honoured with a nobler



memory, nor the Records of England with a more venerable name, to the last syllable of recorded time. His funeral, though he had not so desired, was attended by the great, the powerful, and the good. The pall was borne by the Lord Chancellor, the Dukes of Devonshire and Portland, Earl Fitzwilliam, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Lord Inchiquin, Mr. Windham, and Sir Gilbert Elliott. The funeral train included the noblest of every party; and not the least sorrowful were the children of the emigrant school at Pen, who knew not how great he had been in the State, but that he had been to them a father.

#### HENRY GRATTAN.

BORN A.D. 1746—DIED A.D. 1820.

GRATTAN deserves far more than O'Connell the title of the Liberator. "I stood up for Ireland"—one of the last words spoken by the great patriot, might be taken as the motto of his life. Ireland has never produced a politician so perfectly without reproach, or so utterly devoted to his country; and yet, while such worthy but insignificant men as Lucas, or Smith O'Brien have their public statues in Dublin, he who may be said to have filed through the fetters of his Roman Catholic countrymen, until they were ready to be struck off by the blow of a Plunket, is missed from the streets and public buildings of the metropolis, where he was once the most honoured of Irishmen.\*

Henry Grattan's family was one of considerable importance and influence in Ireland. Dean Swift, in writing of the family, with which he was on intimate terms of friendship, said "the Grattans can raise ten thousand men." His great-grandfather, Patrick Grattan, was a senior fellow in Dublin University, and from the rich emoluments of his fellowship made a large increase to the family possessions. The property passed through his eldest son Henry, to James, who became recorder of Dublin, and was father of the subject of our memoir. He had the reputation of being an honest and worthy man, but was of an irritable temper and without much ability; while his opinions, which were entirely on the side of authority and the established order, were extremely obstinate and shallow. He had the good fortune, however, to marry the daughter of Chief-justice Marley, whose talents descending through his daughter made up perhaps for the deficiency on the Grattan side of this union.

Henry Grattan was born on the 3d of July 1746. He was early sent to a Mr Ball's school in Great Ship Street, a neighbourhood then fashionable with Dublin barristers. At the same school was educated Mr Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare and Chancellor of Ireland. After remaining at this school for a short time, he was removed at his own desire to Mr Young's school in Abbey street, in consequence of an insulting and absurd punishment inflicted upon him by the master. At this new school his conduct won the general respect of his school-fellows, among whom was the uncle of George Canning. In his seventeenth year he was attacked by a severe illness, which harassed

\* Some private friends of Grattan erected a statue of him in the Exchange.

him for a long time, and returned to him in the eventful year 1782. In 1763 he entered the University of Dublin. There he obtained the highest honours of the collegiate course, and formed friendships with several men afterwards eminent,—Foster, afterwards Speaker, Day, a distinguished lawyer and judge, his old schoolfellow Fitzgibbon, and several others. His correspondence with those friends is deeply interesting, and both shows his genius in the process of development, and the amiable and loveable qualities of his character, which men do not display so freely in the more advanced stages of life. His letters rather convey the forecast of a literary reclusé and enthusiast, than of the great popular leader he was afterwards to become, a man whose voice could control the winds and waves of public assemblies—a bold and at the same time prudent statesman. Retiring, fastidious, refined, imaginative, an intense lover of Nature, and most enjoying her loveliness in solitude, he offered at this time of life all the traits of the young poet or contemplative philosopher, rather than of the man of action. But his choice of a profession, and glimpses of public life in its most exalted phases, probably counteracted the tendency of his character to develop inwardly rather than outwardly, and gave a direction to his future course, fortunate for his country, if not the happiest for himself. Perhaps a morbid turn was given to his nature by the circumstances in which he was early placed. The unkindness of his father seems to have caused him much unhappiness; it probably arose from political differences; the elder Grattan shared all the feelings and prejudices of the ruling caste, to which his son was born in opposition. This unhealthy shadow, however, was early removed; Grattan was in his twentieth year when his father died, and he thus alludes to the event in writing to his chief friend, Broome:—"The death of my father I suppose you have heard of. In the greatest agony of body, in the greatest distraction of mind, unexpectedly and impatiently, he expired." The family place was reft away from him; and he only inherited a small patrimony which his father's displeasure could not reach. He thus alludes to this in the same letter:—"I write this from Bellecamp where I have been for three days without any of the family, and where I intend to continue some days longer in the same solitude. I employ myself writing, reading, and courting the muse, and taking leave of that place where I am a guest, not an owner, and of which I shall now cease to be a spectator. I tell myself by way of consolation, that happiness is not the gift of any one spot, however ancient and native, '*est ulubris animus si te non deficit æquus*,' and that wherever I go the muse and your friendship shall accompany me. Perhaps the time may come when fortune '*patre valentior*,' may smile upon me, and shall enable my old age to resign my breath where first I received it. Farewell!—'tis too late to continue this epistle; I am invited to the wood by the wood-quest, the thrush, and every circumstance that attends the evening." This language breathes of great unhappiness, the wound of love, the oppression of a great sorrow, the bitterness of parting from a place his affection for which is plainly indicated in the words last quoted. But he was soon called away from gloomy musings and regrets by the trumpet-call of life; the same year he went to London, and was entered as a student of



the Middle Temple. Here he earnestly devoted himself to his studies; and if in his correspondence great traces of languor and the listless tone of idleness are often to be detected, it was but the effect of intense and ardent labour, showing itself in the intervals of fatigue. He was perfectly free from taste for dissipation; his pleasures were the pure enjoyment of nature and intercourse with like-minded men; his excitement was to hear from the gallery of the House the orations of Burke, or to stand at the bar of the Lords and listen to the speeches of Chatham, whose power of representation and splendour of pointed phrase were evidently a model to him in the formation of his own style; it was probably from the same source he drew his taste in manner and delivery. The strong impression then received is embodied in the sketch which he afterwards drew of the great orator and statesman. It is not to be supposed, however, that his genius submitted to a slavish imitation even of so great a model; we find in his early letters the same antithetic style not yet cultured down, and sometimes ludicrous from its exaggeration, overstudy, and lack of the reality while preserving the outward form of antithesis, which, brought to the greatest perfection, gave such a peculiar stamp to his mature composition. So peculiar is this stamp, that if a few sentences were taken at random anywhere from his writings or speeches, no one tolerably familiar with the style could fail to recognise them as Grattan's. Generally speaking, style comes upon mental development as form upon substance; but in Grattan's case the form came first, foreordained for, and as yet often empty of the matter which was to assume it. As Chatham was his favourite study in eloquence, so Bolingbroke was his favourite author. Whatever he gained from the latter was lamentably counterbalanced by the tinge of scepticism which his mind received from those fascinating writings; and in the dead, cold religion of his day he found nothing to resist their influence. Nor were there unfortunately in his case the springs of youthful piety to keep the heart green; for Grattan's earliest life was spent in a brilliant circle of Irish society in which the lowest tone of morals prevailed, and a total absence of religion. The point of honour was the only religion of the day. His old college friend Day was his chum in the Temple. Some interesting particulars of their life at this time are derived from Mr Day's recollections, communicated to Mr Grattan's son, eighteen years after his friend's death. "We lived," he writes, "in the same chambers in the Middle Temple, and took a house in Windsor Forest, commanding a beautiful landscape; he delighted in romantic scenery. Between both, we lived together three or four years, the happiest period of my life."

When we resided in Windsor Forest he would spend whole moonlight nights rambling and losing himself in the thickest plantations; he would sometimes pause and address a tree in soliloquy, thus preparing himself early for that assembly which he was destined in latter life to adorn. One morning he amused us at breakfast with an adventure of the night before in the forest. In one of those midnight rambles, he stopped at a gibbet and commenced apostrophising the chains in his usual animated strain, when he suddenly felt a tap on his shoulder, and on turning about was accosted by an unknown person—"How the devil did you get down?"

to which the rambler calmly replied—"Sir, I suppose you have an interest in that question."

We are told that Mr Grattan's habits at this period of his life were so eccentric, as to convey to his landlady, at a place where he was staying, an impression of his being deranged. "She complained to one of his friends, that the gentleman used to walk up and down in her garden most of the night, speaking to himself; and though alone, he was addressing some one on all occasions by the name of 'Mr Speaker;' that it was not possible he could be in his senses, and she begged that they would take him away; and that, if they did, she would forgive him all the rent that was due." Mr Day's reminiscences of his friend give us an amusing account of his meeting with Dr Duigenan in the Temple. The Doctor knowing that Grattan's father and Lucas had always lived in the bitterest opposition whilst they were colleagues in the representation of Dublin, thought to please the young templar by an attack upon the latter; but to his great surprise, found in the son the warmest defender of his father's enemy. The discussion passed the bounds of courtesy, and they parted in mutual wrath. In the evening Grattan came to the Grecian, where we used to meet, with a long sword by his side. Duigenan did not make his appearance, but he wrote a poem criticising Grattan's figure with his long sword. "It was comical; I showed it to your father, who was amused by the humorous turn, and so the affair ended." Dr Duigenan's subsequent animosity to Grattan is traced by the narrator to this incident. His letters at this time to his friend Broome show a considerable intellectual advance, but still it is curious to remark in places the love of antithetic balance combined with false weights. We find in every page the curiously elaborate music of antithesis and point, without much approach to any appropriate relation of sense, as if he had not yet perfectly mastered the use of a style of which he had acquired the structure. We can afford to take but one example. "Lord North, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a man busied in state mystery, and learned in finances, spoke in defence of the court, in a manner impetuous, not rapid; full of cant, not melody; deserved the eulogium of a fervent speaker, not a great one. Grenville on the part of opposition was peevish and wrangling, and provoked those whom he could not defeat." We find in the correspondence many criticisms on books evincing considerable judgment and expressed with much precision.

About this time Mr Grattan suffered two losses which he felt extremely, in the death of a sister to whom he was much attached, and that of his mother in the following year. The latter was removed so suddenly that she could not make the disposition she had intended of her property, which in consequence passed to a distant relation. This was the second misfortune of the kind which befell Mr Grattan. From the shadow of these troubles, however, the sun began to shine upon him at last. His eldest sister married Mr Bushe of Kilfane, in the county of Kilkenny; and this placed him in a circle which was then the most refined and agreeable in Ireland. Mr Flood, Mr Langrishe, with Mr Bushe, formed the nucleus of this circle, of which Mr Grattan himself was from thenceforward to be a conspicuous ornament. In this society his genius received fresh incentives. His acquaintance with



Mr Flood was productive of much pleasure and profit to both. They wrote, they argued, they debated together. Of the private theatricals at Kilfane we have already taken some notice.\* In these Mr Grattan took a considerable part. He was an admirer and a habitual frequenter of the stage, from which he probably drew much of his peculiar love of action and effect. On one occasion when Milton's *Comus* was acted at Marlay, Mr. Latouche's place, the epilogue was from Mr Grattan's pen, and does credit to his poetic talent. At this time he was leading a life of great variety between London, Dublin, and Kilkenny. In the latter place he divided his time between Kilfane and Farmley. In Dublin he met with too much hospitality and claret for his taste; in London, he says, "My chambers are comfortable and cheerful; they entice me to be domestic and studious." Windsor too had, as of old, his visits; and there he seems to have enjoyed the melancholy of the woods and solitudes in which his morbid temperament felt at home. As he said of himself most truly, "My mind has always had a hankering after misery. I have cultivated that defect with the most astonishing success, and have now refined my mind into the most aching sensibility imaginable." And again, "The fact is, I have no resolution, and in solitude feel the most trivial incidents as great calamities." It was sometime in the year 1771 that he wrote his celebrated character of Chatham, inserted in *Barataria*, and made very generally known through the medium of elocutional works, in which we believe it was attributed to Lord Chesterfield. It was given in the *Baratinana* as an extract from a forthcoming work of Robertson. It displays a highly finished specimen of that rhetorical style of which after Lord Chatham himself, Grattan was the greatest master. In the autumn of the same year he completed his term at the Middle Temple, and became more in earnest in his legal studies, which the pursuits then generally known as the Muses had previously left little inclination for. The prospect, however, of immediately having a demand made upon his legal acquirements awakened him to the necessity of putting aside other pursuits and supplying their deficiency. The consequence was what might have been expected, an increasing dislike to that factitious and dry science. The man who wept over the works of Gray (who died in this year) was not likely to take kindly to the dull technicalities which it became necessary for him to master; and detestation of the study soon led him to dislike the profession. A visit to Paris broke the monotony of his preparations; but in the following year he was called to the bar, and for a time entered seriously upon its avocations, went circuit, and was engaged in an important suit. His client in this having been unsuccessful, his romantic generosity prompted him to return half of his fifty guinea fee. So far as we can judge from his correspondence there was at this time an unsettled state of feeling, the result of opposite impulses, which resulted in idleness and an impatient sense of weariness, arising from want of a subject of interest to fill his mind and consume its excess of fuel. Happily for him, an occasion soon presented itself to give the proper direction to his genius. On the death of Lord Charlemont's brother, Grattan was returned for his borough of Charlemont on the borders of Armagh and Tyrone. From this event

\* See memoir of Flood.

his career began as the man of the time in Ireland, the first national leader, and not as others had been, the leader of one interest. He entered parliament at a time when Government by corruption had been carried to an extreme by Lords Townshend and Harcourt, the successive Lords-lieutenant. The four or five noble undertakers with whom Government had formerly entered into wholesale contracts for votes were set aside; and the Castle distributed its own patronage, and dispensed its bribes on a well ordered and comprehensive system. "The corruption department" would have described the business of the Chief Secretary's office. The first Octennial parliament, after two prorogations to bring it properly into hand, had met and shown itself much like its predecessors. Irish trade was still tied up, and in a most deplorable and ruined condition. The parliament had never been in a more disgraceful dependence on the ministry. But the great revolution was now commencing in America, the waves of which circling down about the world, aroused a feeling of confidence and popular strength in Ireland as in other countries. The Philadelphia congress published an address to the people of Ireland; and it may easily be imagined that the struggle of the great colony in the west, to protect and free itself from the injustice and domineering propensities of the mother country, to which Ireland had herself been so long a hopeless victim, was regarded with the warmest sympathy and interest. When one-third of the 12,000 troops belonging to Ireland were ordered off to help to quell the insurrection, Lord Effingham resigned his commission rather than serve against the colonists, and received public thanks accompanied by a testimonial from the merchants of Dublin, for his bravery in not fighting; this was expressive of the feeling that prevailed in Ireland towards the American revolutionists. The English Government proposed to supply the place of the Irish troops removed, by 4000 Hessians; this proposal however was refused by the House of Commons, and it declared the intention of the king's Irish subjects to "exert themselves" to render the country secure. This vote was probably the germ of the great volunteer movement. Other symptoms of independence began to manifest themselves in the house, and determined the Government to dissolve it. A paltry measure of Roman Catholic relief had been passed by Government as a first tentative step, in view of the rising spirit of the Protestant body politic, to enlist the Roman Catholics against home rule. In this parliament Grattan appeared. A few days after taking his seat he made his first speech in the house. The following notice is taken from a journal of the day:—"Mr Grattan spoke—not a studied speech, but in reply—the spontaneous flow of natural eloquence. Though so young a man he spoke without hesitation, and, if he keeps to this example, will be a valuable weight in the scales of patriotism." This first effort was on the 15th of December 1775. He was now in his twenty-ninth year, and had attained the full strength if not the perfect ripeness of his genius. In the first session in which he spoke, he was modest and retiring, acquainting himself with the details of public business to which he now wedded himself, giving up all thought of practising in his profession. It was not until the new parliament met, in the Lord-lieutenancy of Lord Buckingham, Lord Harcourt's successor, that the blaze and power



of Grattan's genius began to be felt, scorching the venal ranks of the ministry and warming and cheering the opposition. Every precaution had been taken to make the new parliament all and even more than its predecessor had been; every disgraceful influence had been brought to bear on the newly elected members, and the creation of sixteen new peers, and elevation of many more to higher grades of nobility, quite outdid the precedent in Queen Anne's reign, which had always hitherto been looked upon as extreme. The just expectations of Government were not at first disappointed. The renewed contacts with the country from which Dr. Lucas and his friends had anticipated such a bracing effect, turned out to be only renewed contacts with bribery and corruption, making Government more expensive but not more pure. Although the debasing effect gradually wore off, the first tests showed a most utter subserviency. An English embargo had been laid on the export of provisions; this fresh blow to commerce reduced thousands to starvation. Dublin was paraded by bands of ruined manufacturers and tradesmen. A motion for the removal of the embargo, supported by Grattan, Bushe, Yelverton and Burgh, was rejected by a large majority. A motion of Mr Grattan's for retrenchment was also defeated. Matters, however, were rapidly approaching a crisis. Burgoyne had surrendered at Saratoga; Ireland was weakly guarded; the Irish Government was nearly bankrupt; the restriction of trade was becoming more intolerable and the distress occasioned by it more widespread. The fleets of the allied powers were soon to threaten our shores. It was the opportunity at last which one waits and wonders for in Irish history. The defence of the country was what men had on their lips, but a revolution was in their hearts. Lord North made a larger bid than before for the loyalty of the Roman Catholic population; a considerable measure of relief was passed in England, by which "Papists" were allowed to make leases for 999 years, and other concessions were granted which removed the most practical and galling restrictions. But the volunteers steadily increased in numbers, and many Roman Catholics swelled their ranks by connivance. The Government might bid for their favour, but they dared not arm the Roman Catholic population lest they should only add still more to the array of those unwelcome defenders. Another attempt to anticipate the storm was the introduction of export and import bills, allowing Ireland to trade with the plantations, woollen goods being excepted from exports, tobacco from imports. Of these two the export bill only passed. But the formation of volunteer companies had given a consciousness of strength which was not to be put off with a composition of the debt of justice. The time for compounding had passed by. In ominous imitation of the American colonists, a general resolution was made and carried out not to import or use any article of English manufacture. We have thus briefly glanced at the state of Ireland when Grattan entered upon public life to make our narrative more intelligible to the reader. A meeting of Burgh, Daly, and Grattan, took place at Bray to decide upon the course of action to be pursued in the next session. Daly having been taken ill, the arrangement devolved upon the two others. A form of address, composed by Daly, and corrected by Mr Pery, was adopted, in preference to a more elaborate address by

Grattan. The Government, however, were forewarned of the conspiracy. A conciliatory Address was composed, containing some reference to the state of trade, which it was hoped would satisfy the less determined, and induce them to act as a shield against Grattan's blow. The stratagem was to some extent successful. On the assembling of parliament, Grattan was met as he entered the House by Barry Yelverton, who told him the good news of the address, and dissuaded him from proceeding with his amendment. The Ponsonbys and other moderate men agreed with Yelverton. But, fortunately, Grattan was not to be imposed upon. He proposed his amendment; it was seconded by Lord Westport, a young nobleman chosen for his position, and it was supported by Bushe and Forbes. Mr Burgh, having declared that he approved of the principle, Mr Grattan asked if he spoke for the Government, to which the prime sergeant replied that he spoke for himself and his constituency (the University). Conolly, Conyngham, and Flood, also supported the amendment; and the latter had the credit of suggesting the more catching phrase "free trade" instead of "free export and import;" and had the assurance afterwards to magnify this into being himself the author of the amendment. It must be understood that "free trade" was not here used in its general signification; it did not mean that imports and exports should be free of duties, but that they should not be forbidden by foreign laws, and that the duties on them should be imposed by the home legislature. The people meanwhile supported the action of their representatives, by making non-importation agreements everywhere, and engaging to wear or use nothing manufactured in England. This, besides retaliating on the selfishness of English merchants and manufacturers, had the effect of in some degree reviving Irish industry. The nation for once in its history was unanimous; the ordinary supporters of the Government, finding themselves in the midst of a revolution, and being long free from any scruples of conscience, became suddenly quite patriotic. The amendment was carried, and the address, as amended, was brought up by both Houses of Parliament, through the long street that leads from College Green to Dublin Castle—gay with the banners and uniforms of the volunteers, around the necks of whose muskets might be seen such mottoes as "free trade or ———." The popular leaders were applauded; Mr Grattan especially, was greeted with a cheer which must have been heard in the Council Chamber by Buckingham and Eden. Consternation and rage prevailed in the castle, for such a humiliation was unprecedented in Irish history; abroad the bells were rung, cannons fired, and the whole city was in a tumult of joy.

Next day a vote of thanks was carried almost unanimously to the volunteers, who had rendered possible such an assertion of independence. This was the real beginning of Mr Grattan's career; his management of the amendment showed, as in a forecast, both the firmness and prudence of his statesmanship,—firmness that made him succeed in what others would not attempt,—prudence that made him hold back when others rashly pressed on—the two qualities which rendered him alternately the object of worship and detestation, which made the Dublin populace adore him in College Green, and try to hustle him over into the Liffey from Carlisle Bridge. If he had not in the first in-



stance persevered against the advice of his friends, and afterwards known when to yield and accept an amendment, the united action of the House might never have been secured, and the consequences of parliament and the volunteer army falling into opposition might have been great and fatal. The excesses of the armed people which soon followed, when they stopped members entering the house—even the Speaker himself, to force upon them patriotic oaths, shows what might have been the serious consequences, if the obstacle to their wishes had arisen in parliament itself, instead of in the common enemy, the English Government. The great object of the people was a short money bill, in order that by the power of the purse the Government might be forced to grant to Ireland freedom of trade, or rather freedom to trade.

Grattan counselled good behaviour and moderation; and on the 24th of November he proposed a resolution "that at this time it would be inexpedient to grant new taxes." This was carried by 170 to 47, and next day the supplies were appropriated for six months only, instead of for two years, as proposed by the Government. Mr Grattan next gave notice of moving for a declaration of Irish Rights; what the British parliament gave now, it might take away again; and to render their victories secure it was necessary to procure the repeal of the 6th George I., and the modification of Poynings' law. Mr Grattan was now at the height of popularity. He received the freedom of the Guild of Merchants—of which he was afterwards deprived when in disgrace—and congratulatory addresses from the volunteers. Meanwhile, he was busy educating public opinion, speaking, writing pamphlets, and arousing the spirit of the people, that whatever way the parliamentary powers might array themselves, he might feel under his feet a firm foundation of popular support. He had made up his mind to bring on the declaration of right at the meeting of parliament, considering that the time was now ripe; but all his friends, Burgh, Daly, Ogle, Pery, and Ponsonby, considered it highly rash and premature to do so, and endeavoured to dissuade him; even Charlemont was timid, and only prevented by feelings of delicacy from acceding to Lord Pery's request that he would interfere, because Grattan sat for his borough of Charlemont. Edmund Burke wrote, "Will no one speak to this madman? Will no one stop this madman, Grattan?"

Mr Grattan left Dublin to escape their importunities, and retired to Celbridge Abbey, his cousin Marlay's place. There pondering on his speech, the associations of the place with Swift added to his inspiration, and probably suggested the invocation which had such an electric effect on the Irish Assembly, on an occasion so impressive, and in such a splendid train of eloquence, but that for ever passes the comprehension of a sober-minded Englishman—"Spirit of Molyneux! Spirit of Swift! your genius has prevailed; Ireland is now a nation!" Thus he afterwards said,—"Along the banks of that river, amid the groves and bowers of Swift and Vanessa, I grew convinced that I was right; arguments unanswerable came to my mind, and what I then prepared confirmed me in my determination to persevere; a great spirit rose among the people, and the speech which I delivered afterwards in the House, communicated its power and impelled them

on; the country caught the flame and it rapidly extended. I was supported by eighteen counties, by the grand jury addresses, and the resolutions of the volunteers. I stood upon that ground, and was determined never to yield. I brought on the question the 19th April 1780. That was a great day for Ireland—that day gave her liberty!" This was considered his best speech; voice and manner were singular; but he seemed like one inspired, and for rapidity, fire, and elevation of thought, nothing in an eloquent assembly had ever been heard like it. Even the Lord-lieutenant, in writing to Lord Hillsborough, had to confess that he spoke "with very great ability, and with great warmth and enthusiasm, omitting no arguments." The three resolutions were:—

"1. Resolved that his most excellent Majesty, by and with the consent of the Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only powers competent to enact laws to bind Ireland.

2. That the crown of Ireland is and ought to be inseparably united to the crown of Great Britain.

3. That Great Britain and Ireland are inseparably united under one sovereign, under the common and indissoluble ties of interest, loyalty, and freedom."

The debate which followed was equal to the speech with which it was commenced, but we cannot dwell on its incidents. The result was indecisive; nothing was entered on the books of the House; the battle was drawn; but this was equivalent to a defeat of constituted authority. The Lord-lieutenant thus expressed to the Government his appreciation of the issue:—"The sense of the House against the obligation of any statutes of the parliament of Great Britain, within this kingdom, was represented to me to have been almost unanimous." In the same year Mr. Grattan brought in a bill to remove doubts on the constitution of leases, which showed his interest beyond that of the day, in protecting the poor and weak from the oppression of the rich and powerful. In July he accompanied Lord Charlemont to the north; a general review of the volunteers was then held by the noblemen who commanded them in different parts of Ireland. One effect of this great organisation was a healthy absorption of all the dangerous and troublesome elements and the almost entire freedom from ordinary crime that has usually been observed to accompany great political movements. The English Mutiny Bill was the next subject of excitement. The Irish magistrates refused to recognise it, and the patriotic party brought in a bill to punish mutiny and desertion; but a proviso was inserted with an insidious design, to the effect that the army should be governed by such laws as the king should make or had made, not extending to life or limb. On the heads of the bill being referred to England, the ministry made it perpetual. Mr Grattan declared that if this were carried, he would secede, and appeal to the people by "a formal instrument." A motion which he introduced for its repeal was lost by a large majority; but it was his habit to appeal from parliament to the people, and a pamphlet on the subject created so much sensation that Dr Jebb was employed by the Government to answer it.

In 1781 a Roman Catholic relief bill was introduced by Mr Luke Gardner (afterwards Lord Mountjoy) to which Mr Grattan at once gave his most earnest support. "It should be the business of parliament," he



said, "to unite every denomination of Irishmen in brotherly affection and regard to the constitution." This language was new and astonishing to the House. Flood and Charlemont were opposed to the bill, although it was after all a very modest one; it merely removed the restrictions upon the holding of property and education of Roman Catholic children. Possibly this is a degree of enlightenment to which we may return in the circle of time, forbidding Roman Catholic or even Christian children to be educated as such. What was once deemed wisdom may be so deemed again. Generally speaking, the volunteers were on the side of removing the penal restrictions. Many thousands of Roman Catholics had been received into their ranks as brothers in arms, and it was impossible to maintain as they stood shoulder to shoulder for the rights of Ireland, that those rights did not belong to all. "I give my consent to it," exclaimed Grattan, "because I would not keep two millions of my fellow-subjects in a state of slavery, and because, as the mover of the declaration of rights, I would be ashamed of giving freedom to but six hundred thousand of my countrymen, when I could extend it to two millions more." An important step in this direction was taken at the famous convention of volunteers held at Dungannon in December 1782. It was feared that some mischief might arise from the organisation of force, if not governed by mind. A meeting of Lord Charlemont, Grattan, and Flood, took place at Charlemont House, at which resolutions were drawn up, directed against English legislation and the law of Poynings, by which the heads of Irish bills were referred to the English privy council. After the meeting Grattan thought of the omission of the Roman Catholics; he knew that it was vain to consult his colleagues or to hope for their consent. He therefore drew up a third resolution, to the effect "that we hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion, to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves; that we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland." Mr Dobbs, who was to bring the resolutions to the convention, was ready mounted when this was forced into his portmanteau; and being received as the product of the illustrious triumvirate, two of whom were so firmly attached to Protestantism, it was passed with only two dissentient voices out of 242 delegates voting. These delegates represented thirty thousand men of Ulster; not the men who had been crushed and trampled for generations out of human nature, and then been trampled and crushed for being monsters; but hardy yeomen who had not only been free, but had been in a position of superiority, had been accustomed to hold their heads higher than men having none but equals to measure with, and had a tradition of military valour very different from the tradition of defeat which descends to the Irish Roman Catholics, which tends to loosen their sinews and make their pulse low in the hour of fight,—and those northern volunteers were a match, if not more, for any yeomanry or militia that England could send to meet them. Some have speculated what might have been the result if Grattan had distrusted the gifts of England, and known, as he well might, that

what she gave now in a moment of extreme danger, when her army in America had surrendered and she was at war with France and Spain, she would rudely snatch back when her hands were again at liberty. He would probably then have used this army to effect the separation of Ireland; but if it is impossible for ordinary mortals to tell what shall be, never was there prophet who could tell what might have been. All over Ireland the resolutions of the convention were adopted by the freeholders and grand juries of every county; that in favour of the Roman Catholics worked; Mr Gardner's bill was introduced the very day of the meeting of the convention; and the feeling of the whole country being in its favour owing to the initiation of Mr Grattan, and the sense of brotherhood which the great national struggle had produced, it was impossible that it should not pass. It stopped short of much; it did not enfranchise Roman Catholics, or permit them to be elected to parliament, or to hold office or military command, or indeed to serve in the army, but it put them in other respects on the footing of citizens. In February 1782 Mr Grattan again brought forward his motion for an address to the king declaratory of the rights of Ireland; but corruption was still strong, and it was lost by a great majority. The source of corruption, however, was now about to fail; and how great had been its extent was to be shown by the effects of its removal. Too late, Lord North had fallen and Lord Rockingham's ministry came into power. The Duke of Portland was chosen to fill the position of Lord Carlisle, who was recalled, and Mr Fitzpatrick took Mr Eden's place as secretary. Grattan succeeded in carrying a motion for a call of the House on the 16th of April, the Speaker being ordered to summon the members to be in their places "as they tendered the rights of the Irish parliament." The new administration not having had time or material to form an Irish policy—for the outgoing secretary refused to inform his successor—asked for an adjournment of the motion of which Grattan had given notice. Mr Fox and the Marquis of Rockingham wrote to Lord Charlemont asking him to induce Grattan to defer it; the former expressed a hope that the great patriot might be able to find that some line could be drawn advantageously to both countries, and that he would show the world "that there may be a government in Ireland, of which he is not ashamed to form a part." A fortnight or three weeks was all that was desired, but not even the very flattering terms of the request could shake the firmness of Grattan. He was ill in bed when Lord Charlemont called and laid these letters before him. His answer was "No time! no time!" and he dictated a reply, the pith of which was, that they could not defer questions which were "public property." It was then proposed that Charlemont, Grattan, and their friends should take office; the Government offered to grant anything they asked for, providing they would agree to an adjournment, and not at once press for independence, but allow time for consideration. Charlemont and Grattan, however, would accept nothing; as Grattan himself said afterwards, speaking of those times,—“I was young and poor; I had scarcely £500 a year; Lord Charlemont was as poor as any peer; I as any commoner. We were, however, determined to refuse office, for our opinion, and a just one too, was, that office in Ireland was



different from office in England; it was not a situation held for Ireland, but held for an English Government, often in collision with, and frequently hostile to, Ireland." Flood, Daly, Burgh, and Yelverton were disposed to grant delay; but Grattan's influence was then supreme with Lord Charlemont, and his firmness was a second time productive of success. It cannot be questioned that he was right; he gave no time for Government influence to reassert itself; he took the moment of its removal, judging that the English ministry, whatever might be its shade, would never willingly agree to Irish independence, and that to consent to an adjournment was only to give an adversary time to organise resistance. On the 9th of April, Fox communicated to the English House of Commons a message from the king, recommending an adjustment of the difficulties between the two countries, and a similar communication was conveyed to the Irish parliament by Provost Hutchinson, who stated that he had always been in favour of the right of Ireland to independent legislation, and would give his earnest support to any vote or address with the object of obtaining it. Ponsonby moved an address in reply, which was the usual empty echo of the royal oracle. Then Grattan rose and moved his amendment; it was carried unanimously, for the new Government felt it vain to make any resistance. The repeal of the Act of 6th George I. immediately followed in the English parliament, and of Poyning's law in the Irish. Grattan also carried a bill "to punish mutiny and desertion," which repealed the perpetual mutiny act, and by another measure he endeavoured to secure the judicial independence of Ireland. Thus the freedom of Ireland was actually for a time achieved by Grattan; there was an interval which we can scarcely now credit, during which it was independent, and the giant who had rolled off the mountain of oppression was almost an object of worship. He had been offered by Mr Conolly, on behalf of Government, the Viceregal Lodge and Phoenix Park, which was somewhat as if Windsor Castle were offered to the leader of opposition to betray his party. He was now entitled to receive with unsoiled hands an honourable reward. Fifty thousand pounds were voted to him, his friends having refused double the amount.

Grattan having won so much from a liberal ministry, thought the patriotic party bound to show some consideration for the difficulties of its position. He would therefore have gone no further, and this was exactly the moment waited for by one who had been left so far behind, that Grattan never thought of him as a rival. He had stopped in the race for seven years in the enjoyment of a rich office, and had then followed hesitatingly and at a distance; but when Grattan paused at what he deemed the winning-post, Flood, who never had a chance before, rushed on alone to a more extreme goal. In vain Grattan endeavoured to recall him; he soon came to be looked upon by the country as a sorry loser of the race he had so gloriously won. The simple repeal of the act 6th George I. was not enough for Flood: he insisted on an express act of renunciation by the English parliament. In vain Grattan argued both on the ground of generosity, and that if renunciation were required the possibility of reassumption would be admitted. Parliament and nine of the twelve judges agreed with this view; but the rabble and the volunteers agreed with Flood. The latter could no

longer keep their fingers out of legislation. Grattan made one of his finest speeches on the occasion of Flood's being refused leave to bring in his Bill of Rights, and moved "that the legislature of Ireland is independent; and that any person who shall, by writing or otherwise, maintain that a right in any other country to make laws for Ireland internally or externally exists or can be revived, is inimical to the peace of both the kingdoms." The motion which actually passed, and which he substituted for this, omitted the personality. He was no doubt stung at the attempt to rob him of the honour of having made a final settlement, and for this reason opposed the view with more bitterness than, perhaps, there was occasion for. When the independent Dublin volunteers, of the corps of which he was colonel, requested him to give Mr Flood his hearty support, he took their address as a dismissal; he therefore told them that in the succession of officers they would have an opportunity "to indulge the range of their disposition." They re-elected him; but in the following October he lost the command when he voted against army retrenchment. Nothing could have been more unfortunate for the country than the rivalry and opposition between the two principal champions. It committed them both fatally; it threw one into the arms of the Government, the other into the embrace of the rabble. Grattan became reactionary; Flood, a demagogue. Had both united to consolidate and give permanence to the conquests already made, and to advance in a steady and deliberate manner, as Grattan would probably have continued to do if not committed to pull against Flood, the unhappy event of the union would probably never have happened. This dispute seemed to leave everything that had been done, open and unsettled, and encouraged the English Government to plot for a recovery of that which England had lost. A decision in the Court of King's Bench of England, by Lord Mansfield, on an Irish appeal, which was really one that had remained over from the past, and had already been argued at a great expense, and could not reasonably be brought back to Ireland to be reconsidered, appeared however to affirm Mr Flood's arguments. But what shows that Grattan was right and Flood wrong was the fact that the Renunciation Bill introduced by Mr Townshend, in January 1783, and passed without difficulty, did not render the Irish legislature secure; nothing could have done that but union and honesty among Irishmen. The result of all this was a complete revulsion of popular feeling against Mr Grattan. It is indeed one of the many lessons which history offers of the fickleness and insignificance of popular affections, only to be won by inflaming, and retained by continuing the fever of the public mind. In little more than two months Grattan became one of the most unpopular men in the country. The great exertions he had undergone, the excitement of praise, the irritation of unjust blame, had such an effect upon his health that he was advised to try the waters of Spa. On his return a marriage was arranged with Miss Henrietta Fitzgerald, but it was nearly prevented by a violent illness in which she was given over by the chief Dublin physicians; but one was discovered by the strenuous affection of Grattan, whose skill and boldness recovered her from the very jaws of death. His marriage followed, and he now fulfilled his early plan of making Tinnéinch



his home. It was a handsome house, standing at the extremity of the Dargle glen, only separated by a road from the romantic woods and lawns of Powerscourt. It had formerly been an inn, the resort of numbers who came attracted by the scenery of the loveliest spot of wood, water, and green grass, in Ireland. Mr Grattan had long selected it "with an eye of forecast" for the residence of his future life. Into this calm harbour he put for a while, enjoying a more stable and realised happiness than that of popular affection and admiration. But the interval of peace was not long. In 1783 there was a general election, and Grattan was again returned for the borough of Charlemont. Mr Flood soon produced his scheme of reform, backed up by the still unbroken force of the volunteers. There was much to be said in its favour. Parliamentary independence being won, internal reform was a natural consequence; and, indeed, looking back at the position from latter days, it is impossible to question that there was an immediate necessity for the measure; that without it everything won was insecurely held; that the time was come, and that when the same party which now opposed, endeavoured to obtain, the time had gone by; that Flood was right, though Grattan was not wrong. The former saw the need only, heedless of policy, unscrupulous of means, and made impossible for a long time (for ever, as it turned out), by injudicious forcing, what Mr Grattan would have allowed to open like a natural flower on the plant he had fostered. He deplored this inconsiderate haste, and gave the motion but a cold support, which from him amounted to nothing. On the question of retrenchment, which Flood also endeavoured to coerce parliament into undertaking, Grattan directly opposed. In both instances he was in favour of a decent delay, influenced probably by three considerations; 1st. that very great concessions had just been made, and that it was impolitic to appear insatiable and ungenerous to a new Government accountable to a jealous public opinion in England; 2nd. that public exaction in Ireland was much excited; and 3rd. that the part which he had himself taken in extorting so much, and raising so powerful a tone of public spirit, obliged him personally to use a greater moderation, and to guard against evil consequences. The part he felt himself bound to perform of opposing the popular demands and supporting the administration was one of extreme delicacy; and perhaps only to be kept clear from imputation by the character of a man who maintained the most strict and self-denying independence. There can be no doubt that the division between Flood and Grattan, dividing as it did the whole patriotic party, and making united action impossible, making one cold where the other was hot, one take the road to the right because the other chose the road to the left, was the breach through which the flood of English influence tided in, and overwhelmed the constitution asserted with so great difficulty. On Mr Grattan's part the motive of thwarting Flood was unconscious, and the feeling to do so instinctive; the doing so right. And yet in this case to do right was to divide the country, and thus to do wrong; so that although right in the abstract, and persevered in at a most noble sacrifice of popularity, and it had almost been (on more than one occasion) of life, it would have been far better

if the great patriot had led, instead of endeavouring to oppose, the progress of volunteer legislation. If Grattan had been at the head of the convention there would have been a very different result. The motion for retrenchment gave occasion to the terrible encounter between Grattan and Flood which has been already adverted to in our memoir of the latter. Grattan was in favour of economy, but not of breaking faith with England, on such an essential article of the pact as the share allotted to Ireland of military expenditure. In common with Bushe, Ponsonby, and other independent men, he stood up for an honest fulfilment of the bargain. Flood had the rashness to taunt him with the grant of £50,000 made by parliament for his services in '82. Grattan repelled the taunt with dignity, and gave a short, cool, and conclusive answer to the other accusations implied; then passing from the quiet tone of self-defence, to one of the keenest invective, he inflicted a punishment on his distinguished opponent, such probably as no public man ever endured before or since. A challenge was the instantaneous consequence; before the debate was over they left the House, but it has already been detailed how the duel was prevented by the arrest and re-arrest of Flood; and how, when the latter gave a fresh insult, he refused satisfaction, and altogether did not come out of the affair in a creditable manner, at least according to the duelling notions of the day. During the sitting of the volunteer convention in Dublin, Mr Grattan was asked by George Robert Fitzgerald to dinner, to meet the Earl of Bristol (bishop of Derry) and a number of volunteer officers of extreme opinions. After dinner an urgent message summoned him to the privy council, and but for this circumstance, which for some reason seemed much to disconcert his entertainers, he would probably have been murdered by a mob lying in wait for him. On his way to the Castle he was warned of the danger by a faithful servant. Mr Grattan, as we have said, had become an independent ally of the Duke of Portland's government; because he believed it honestly inclined, so far as any English government could, to do justice to Ireland. He was far from belonging to the stupid and fanatical school of "irreconcilables," but, in any case, the present administration was one which had in opposition supported the Irish cause; and, since coming into power, had made every concession that it was reasonable to expect from it in so short a time. Flood, on the other hand, had adopted a line of factious opposition, and had obtained a complete and baneful influence over the Earl of Charlemont. The consequence of this was the gradual estrangement of Charlemont and Grattan, and the latter being unable to carry out the wishes of his patron in parliament, bought a seat for his lordship's relative Mr Stewart, to counterbalance his retaining the representation of the borough of Charlemont. On the question of the augmentation of the army there was a complete rupture of political relations and private friendships. It originated with Lord Charlemont, who could not bear to see his own borough's representative supporting a Government which had treated him with, what he considered, disrespect. The fact was, that Lord Charlemont had shown no disposition to take the concessions of the Whigs in any light but as victories over an enemy; and in consequence of this, and of his allying himself with Flood, he had not been summoned to the meetings of the



Privy Council. Grattan, on the other hand, was ; and his attending them gave so much offence, that he was obliged to make the offer not to attend any to which his friend was not also summoned. This, however, was not deemed satisfactory, and a further disagreement having arisen on the army augmentation bill, and Grattan being unable to act as he was required, Lord Charlemont wrote in a wounded but restrained tone, desiring that, greatly as he admired his abilities and esteemed his integrity, their friendship should be at an end. Grattan replied in explanation of his conduct, hoping their intercourse might still continue, and expressing affection unalterable whatever might be the result. Charlemont, however, was much hurt in his pride, and did not respond ; and although they met frequently in the transaction of public business, intercourse between them was never afterwards renewed, and only between their families after Grattan's death. But the latter's testimony to Charlemont shows how warmly the friendship lived on in his heart. We have not quoted it in the memoir of Charlemont, and will therefore transcribe a few words from it here :—"Formed to unite aristocracy and the people with the manners of a court and the principles of a patriot ; with the flame of liberty and the love of order ; unassailable to the approaches of power, of profit, or of titles ; he annexed to the love of freedom a veneration for order, and cast on the crowd that followed him the gracious light of his own accomplishments, so that the very rabble grew civilised as it approached his person. . . . Should the author of this pamphlet pray, he could not ask for his son a greater blessing than to resemble the good Earl of Charlemont." One lamentable consequence of the separation of Grattan from Flood and Charlemont was, that his influence ceased to operate for the Roman Catholics in the councils of the volunteers, and the liberality which had been the work of the former, completely disappeared when the latter two were in command alone. Another direct consequence was the unfortunate opinion which Mr Grattan gave in favour of the appointment of Fitzgibbon as Attorney-general ; his advice decided the choice of Government, and raised up against both himself and his country a powerful and malignant enemy. Nothing could ever have induced him to recommend such an appointment had his friends not left him and pursued extreme courses, to which he felt the necessity of setting up decided obstacles. Mr Grattan gave the most useful support to Lord Northington and the Duke of Rutland, and the value of his influence and powerful words received the Government's warmest acknowledgment. When Flood introduced his Reform Bill in 1784, supported by twenty-six counties and presented in a constitutional manner, not as in the preceding year forced on parliament with armed demonstrations, Mr Grattan spoke strongly in its favour. It is not true, as it has been alleged, that he gave it a cold support as on the former occasion ; but the rejection of this bill, on the motion for its committal, by a majority of seventy-four, again put him in accord with Government, for, although most friendly to true freedom in Ireland, they could not venture at such a time on a great constitutional change. He disapproved the strong step taken by Fitzgibbon, of issuing an attachment against the sheriffs who had summoned a congress to reassemble ; but while disapproving of this course, he used

language of the severest reproof to the sheriffs, warning them that such indiscretion, if persisted in, would overturn the laws of their country. In the debate on the address in 1785 he delivered a speech memorable as a landmark in the volunteer movement, and which explains the illiberal change that had come over it in relation to the Roman Catholics. He said:—"I would now wish to call the attention of the House to the alarming measure of drilling the lowest classes of the populace, by which a stain has been put on the character of the volunteers. The old, the original volunteers, had become respectable, because they represented the property of the nation; but attempts had been made to arm the poverty of the kingdom. They had originally been the armed property, were they to become the *armed beggary*?" This marks the decline from revolution to rebellion; from the volunteers of '82, who won a sunshine hour of Irish independence, to the united Irishmen in '98, who brought about the Union. Such was the view that induced Mr Grattan to support the Militia Bill, which was undoubtedly intended to sap the strength of the volunteers. Fitzgibbon repeated the argument that the volunteers had changed, especially since such men as Grattan had withdrawn from their leadership. In this session the new Attorney-general passed an eulogium, which stands in strange contradiction to the bitter attacks he afterwards made on the man who had helped him into office. "From the first," he said, "I have ever reprobated the idea of appealing to the volunteers, though I was confident Ireland was in no danger while they followed the counsel of the man whom I am proud to call my most worthy and honourable friend (Mr Grattan); the man to whom this country owes more than any State ever owed to any individual; the man whose wisdom and virtue directed the happy circumstances of the times, and the spirit of Irishmen, to make us a nation. Sir, I say that, while the volunteers continued under his influence, I feared no evil from them; but I apprehend, what has since come to pass, that when they should forsake him, designing incendiaries would make them the tools of faction, the instruments of their vile ambition. Let me entreat gentlemen to recollect what has happened. After the 6th George I. had been repealed—after an Irish mutiny act had passed—after the law of Poynings had been explained—after the judges had been rendered independent—at the moment when the acclamations of the nation were loudest in praise of the man who had most justly become their idol at the suggestion of some person, everything was changed in a moment, and he was loaded with foul and unmerited calumny, for no other reason but because he ventured to have an opinion of his own, and chose rather to rely on the faith of a brave and generous nation, than on the fine spun quibbles of a special pleader, which ninety-nine men out of every hundred that joined in the abuse, could not understand, and which they would be as ready to censure, if the same instigators that set them on to vilify the saviour of this country had declared against renunciation."

One of the most celebrated of Mr Grattan's efforts, in the Irish parliament, occurred on Mr Orde's commercial propositions. As the eleven resolutions were first framed by Mr Pitt they were on the whole favour-



able to Ireland, and formed a commercial treaty fair to both countries; and as such they were supported by Grattan. But when the agitation of the English manufacturers forced the minister to alter them in a way that bound the legislature of Ireland to follow that of England in marine enactments, and otherwise curtailed the freedom of trade, Mr Grattan joined in the opposition by which these new propositions were defeated. It has been thought that Mr Pitt's second scheme aimed at indirectly restoring the supremacy of England: it is certain that its rejection led him to determine upon the Union. Grattan's speech on this occasion was one of his best, and had the effect of restoring his popularity. It was further re-established by his taking up the tithe question, which was giving rise to disturbances in the south of Ireland. He first introduced a resolution for the suppression of the riots, and then followed it up by endeavouring to have the whole question considered with a view to removing the cause of discontent. It has too often been the way in Irish legislation to fight the symptoms and not the disease. The motion for a committee of inquiry was thrown out by a majority of 121 to 49; but Grattan's speech in moving it was a masterpiece of eloquence and reasoning, and if it did not convince the House, it educated the country. His motion was renewed in April 1788, but the sudden prorogation of the House prevented a new division being taken on it. In the same year he visited London in consequence of Mrs Grattan's ill health. It was a period of some importance and great interests. At this time George III. had shown symptoms of that insanity which shortly after gave rise to a severe party struggle in Ireland, leading to consequences of a permanent nature. Mr Grattan during his visit became acquainted with Lord Spencer and Mr Pelham, who were, in case of a regency, to have been intrusted with the government of Ireland. A letter to Mr Day shows that Mr Grattan was at this moment speculating on the representation of the county of Dublin or of Wicklow.

When the regency question came on for decision in the Irish parliament Grattan and Fitzgibbon were the leaders of the opposing parties. With a Tory majority in England which had insisted on restricting the Prince's powers as regent to a mere performance of the state duties of the office, and a Whig majority in Ireland determined on a regent who was connected with their party having unrestricted powers, the likelihood of a collision of the legislatures was obvious, and Mr Pitt's orders to Lord Buckingham were to use any means to make the Irish parliament reflect the proceedings of the English. The usual process of corruption and intimidation was resorted to, but in vain; parliament was at length summoned in February 1789, without having been converted to the opinions of the administration by the arguments employed during the recess. Mr Grattan proposed an address, following the precedent of that to the Prince of Orange, on the abdication of James II. There was no one, he contended, to give royal assent to the Regency bill announced by the Government. Such an address moved by Mr Conolly, and seconded by Mr George Ponsonby, was carried, asking the Prince to accept the regency, with the plenitude of royal power. The Lord-lieutenant refused to transmit this address, and Mr Grattan therefore moved that it should be presented to the Prince by a committee of both Houses. This, and

a motion of censure on the Lord-lieutenant for his unconstitutional conduct, were carried by larger majorities. The address was carried over by a deputation, including the Duke of Leinster and Lord Charlemont, but the recovery of the King ended the difficulty which his illness had been the unhappy cause of displaying. The Prince himself was of course much gratified ; " Tell Grattan," he said to Mr Pelham, " that I am a most determined Irishman ! " But this acquisition to the nation did not at all compensate for the resentment of a most crushing party in England. Mr Pitt was determined by this dispute on a complete change of policy towards Ireland, and the prospect of the Union grew more distinctly developed in his mind. Mr Grattan was once more put into decided opposition ; in 1790 he was elected to parliament for the city of Dublin, and became again for some years the undoubted leader of the patriotic party in the House and in the country. In this capacity his great opponent was corruption ; and this, which was gradually like dry rot eating away the independence of parliament, and in a few years was to cause it to founder, he missed no opportunity of exposing. Mr Fitzgibbon threatened to " buy the House," and, on the fulfilment of his threat, acknowledged that this operation cost, in money, about half-a-million. Grattan some years afterwards made the following comment on this remarkable declaration :—" Half a million, or more, was expended some years ago to break an opposition ; the same, or a greater sum may be necessary now ; so said the principal servant of the crown. The House heard him ; I heard him ; he said it standing on his legs, to an astonished and indignant nation ; and he said it in the most extensive sense of bribery and corruption. The threat was carried out ; the peerage was sold ; the caiffis of corruption were everywhere—in the lobby, in the street, on the steps, and at the door of every parliamentary leader, whose thresholds were worn by the members of the then administration, offering titles to some, amnesty to others, and corruption to all." This daring system of bribery and proscription against those who were not found amenable to softer influences was the origin of the famous " Round Robin " signed by the Duke of Leinster, the Archbishop of Tuam, and all the great peers and commoners of the honest party (as the opposition from this period might be properly distinguished) and resulted in the formation of the Whig Club, of which Grattan was the principal founder. It acted in concert with the Whig Club of England ; its objects were to fight political corruption, to obtain an internal reform of parliament, and to prevent the Union. With the exception of a renewed attempt to settle the tithe question by a proposal of tithe composition very much the same as that carried forty years afterwards, not without what almost amounted to a civil war, Mr Grattan's conduct of the leadership of the Whig party in Ireland was almost entirely with a view to the above objects. So shameful were the proceedings of ministers that Grattan made a motion for their impeachment. It was defeated by 144 to 82. His attack upon the Government, however, was so very severe, and hurt the feelings of the venal majority so severely (the administration was past feeling) that a menace was raised of turning him out of the House, or presenting him at the bar of the House of Lords. As the Government did not care much for the dignity of its supporters, this vindication was



not attempted. On the 8th of April 1790, this corrupt parliament was dissolved. The public estimation of Mr Grattan was shown by his victories in the Dublin election over the Castle nominees; he and his colleague, Lord Henry Fitzgerald, were carried amid great enthusiasm through the city. It was probably with no regret that the chancellor found an opportunity of quelling the popular spirit prevailing in the capital, in a dispute between the court of aldermen, which was principally Tory, and the common council chiefly composed of Whigs. Each had appointed a different lord mayor, and the custom in such a case was for the aldermen to send down the name of a third; in this instance they refused to do so, and an appeal was made to the Lord-chancellor, who rejected the suit of the Commons in most contemptuous terms. The Whig Club took up the cause of the latter, and Mr Grattan, as the representative of the city, bore a very leading part, and acted as secretary to the Club in its controversy with Lord Clare. In 1790 the "Catholic Committee" framed a petition for the removal of the remainder of the penal laws, and from this time a considerable agitation was kept up, which at length led to the introduction of a bill in 1793 to admit members of the Roman Church to all the privileges of citizens, the elective franchise excepted. Mr Grattan warmly supported their claims, and had interviews with Mr Pitt and the Prince of Wales, in which both expressed themselves very favourable to the cause. The Lord-chancellor Clare was violently opposed to it; and did more to rouse the spirit of the Roman Catholic people than even the efforts of Grattan and the committee. The passing of the bill was perhaps in some degree attributed to the obviously approaching declaration of war by the French Republic, which made it a necessity to conciliate the Roman Catholic population, from which to draw a supply of soldiers, and prevent the enemy from gaining to their side such allies as the Irish proved at Fontenoy. But while the Government granted this measure of relief, it also adopted the precautionary measure of an "Arms Act," and the convention act against the election and appointment of committees to petition parliament. The latter measure was warmly opposed by Grattan, and proved in later days the great stumbling block of O'Connell, who was prevented by it from organising the immense force ready to obey his direction. Grattan deserved and received much of the credit of the measure to which these were appended as safeguards. His masterly speeches at the opening of the sessions of 1792 and 1793, and the eloquence which he brought to the support of Mr Hobart's bill convinced all classes in the country, and carried it through the House; while the tact with which he overcame the objections of the English Chancellor, and smoothed down all obstacles, was indispensable to the success of the bill. Mr Burke's testimony to Grattan's share in the work is very strong. "I most sincerely congratulate you, and both these countries on the final success, in the House of Commons, of the last, and the greatest effort of your genius. Your wonderful abilities were never more distinguished, nor in a better cause. You have restored three millions of citizens to their king and their country. . . . It gives me great consolation, among a thousand vexatious circumstances, to reflect that my son, who is so much devoted to you, has been of some use as a pioneer to you, who, as a great

general, have conducted the operations of the campaign." On the question of Reform which occupied some part of the session of 1793, having been brought forward by Mr William Ponsonby and supported by Mr Conolly, Mr Grattan took a different view from that of 1783. Ten years had passed by in which he had seen and contended with parliamentary corruption carried to an incredible extent. He was now ardently in favour of the reform of parliament; the time was ripe, and now, instead of being proposed to them at the point of the bayonet by a demagogue striving to distance those who had won honour legitimately, it was brought forward by country gentlemen of standing, against their own interests. Not only therefore was he in favour of reform, but he thought it not enough. It was in vain to reform parliament if the power to corrupt it was left to ministers, unless human nature could be reformed, and all men made incorruptible. This represents fairly the position he assumed on the question without burdening our memoir with lengthened quotations. A pension bill and a responsibility bill he considered were necessary parts of the radical measure that the country really required. He therefore moved "that a committee be appointed to inquire what abuses had taken place in the constitution of the country, and in the administration of the government thereof, and to report such temperate remedies as may appear most likely to redress the same." On the 11th of February, Grattan moved three reform resolutions, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Parnell, carried an evasive amendment by a large majority, 153 to 71. One of Grattan's warmest supporters, on this occasion, was Mr Stewart, afterwards Lord Castlereagh. In the next year the question was again brought forward, and Mr Grattan supported it; but in the days of the French Revolution, just after the regicide, and when in Ireland itself the United Irishmen were forming their plans for reform of a different kind, and the country was distracted with Roman Catholic defenders and Protestant Peep-o'-day Boys; the convention at Dungannon and the Catholic Committee in Dublin, parliament was not disposed to plunge into the cold waters of change. The defeat of the preceding year was therefore repeated still more decisively, the numbers being 142 to 44. In 1794 most important negotiations passed between Pitt and Grattan, who went over to London to see the minister. It was proposed that Grattan himself should join the administration, in the policy of which the Duke of Portland assured him there was to be a decided change. His old objection, however, to taking office (Chancellorship of the Exchequer in the Irish Government was suggested) was as strong as ever, and he resolutely refused it. Pitt appeared friendly to reform, and on the Roman Catholic question would promise so much;—"Not to bring it forward as a Government measure, but if the Government were pressed, to yield it." That the Government would be pressed was patent, as all classes in Ireland were now united in favour of it. Lord Fitzwilliam was sent over to carry out the conciliatory policy determined on; but Grattan had been warned that Pitt would cheat him, and so it proved. The history of Lord Fitzwilliam's too brief administration has already been told in this work. Mr Grattan was the mover of the address in 1795, a position strange to him. He presented the Roman Catholic petition of those who would have been his con-



stituents if not disfranchised by their faith. Edmund Burke wrote, "I congratulate you on the auspicious opening of your session. Surely Great Britain and Ireland ought to join in wreathing a never-fading garland for the head of Grattan." In February, Grattan, on the faith of the understanding with Pitt, proposed a vote of £200,000 for manning the fleet. A number of good measures were ready to enter the House; reform, emancipation, repeal of the convention act; leave had actually been obtained to bring in the emancipation and police bills, when suddenly, by some underhand intrigue, Fitzwilliam was recalled, and everything fell to the ground at once. Mr Beresford, the great placeman of the day, had been ignominiously dethroned from office, and had his revenge by representing the Roman Catholic emancipation to which Lord Fitzwilliam was pledged as immediately fatal to the country, and so alarmed the poor old king, whose sanity and insanity were never quite distinguishable, that the counsels of the Government were suddenly changed, the policy towards the Roman Catholics reversed, and the minister of this policy, Lord Fitzwilliam, recalled without the assignment of a reason. Explanation was refused by Pitt on the ground of official responsibility. Lord Fitzwilliam declared, if his offence was connecting himself with Grattan, who in an unofficial capacity had acted as his right hand man, that when an enemy's fleet had threatened their shores, and immediate supplies were required, it was on the security which his name afforded to the nation, that the supplies were cheerfully voted. The day of Lord Fitzwilliam's departure was one of the darkest that Ireland had ever seen. It was felt that wrath had gone forth; business was suspended; the capital went into mourning; the outgoing viceroy's carriage was drawn to the shore by the most respectable citizens; the reception of his successor, Lord Camden, was like the entry of an enemy; unfortunately, however, what united all in the feeling of resentment did not unite them in action. The Roman Catholics were the sufferers. In passive subjection to their rulers, and grateful for the crumbs which might fall from the table to which they could not be received as children, all was well until they were tantalised with the prospect of emancipation, only to see it unaccountably snatched away. Then they grew dangerous, and the Protestants, their allies up to this point, became afraid of them. The rebellion cloud enlarged and darkened. There was a panic among the gentry; the Orange Society was formed for defensive purposes, but the defence of frightened men often changes its character into an attack on the unoffending. Religious animosity, the great curse of Ireland, was rekindled. A wound, a hundred years old, broke out afresh. Again Protestants and Roman Catholics began to range on opposite sides; the Jacob and Esau of Ireland struggled; the former fought under the protection of the law, the latter had the law for an enemy. A persecution of the Roman Catholics was actively set on foot in the northern province and in Munster—"To hell or Connaught" was the threatening notice often affixed to the door of the terrified "papiat," in allusion to the edict by which they had been banished to that province in the reign of Elizabeth. This hint, if not taken, was followed by the destruction of their homestead. The ranks of the United Irishmen were swelled with desperate men, for whom there was no legal redress.

It was fancied that the object in view was extermination of the Roman Catholics. Roman Catholic writers have stated that this object was set forth in the original oath of the Orange Society. The assertion, however, rests upon poor authority, and it is not credible that the gentry at the head of the society would have sanctioned such an obligation. There is no doubt, however, that in some counties many thousands of harmless and industrious people were driven from their homes, and that in many localities the Roman Catholics were well nigh exterminated. The magistrates completed the work of the panic stricken Protestants; they did not allow the unhappy outcasts to haunt the scenes of their former prosperity. Many of them, without any offence being alleged against them, were thrown into prison, or impressed for the royal navy. In 1796 an Indemnity Bill had to be passed to absolve those magistrates and military officers who had performed lawless acts against their fellow-subjects. We have considered it necessary to state briefly the nature of the transition from the brightest to one of the darkest epochs in Irish history, to explain the course pursued by Mr Grattan. On the arrival of Lord Camden, he moved for a committee on the state of the nation. He claimed Catholic emancipation as an engagement of the Government which all its supporters were bound to adhere to and support. He spoke severely of the ignorance of the English ministers and their willingness to believe the falsehoods of the interested and discontented, while deaf to the authorised exponents of the people of Ireland. "The British ministers in 1792 gave hopes to the Catholics. The new colleagues in 1794 gave hopes; and both have now united in disappointing those hopes which they both had excited. The public excitement on this point is to be charged to them. So is the disappointment on the general state of affairs; they send over a viceroy professedly to unite and satisfy the people; he proceeds to the reform of certain abuses, and gets a great supply of money and men, and then they recall him in the occupation of his reforms. Having retained the money, they recall their minister of reformation, because he has displaced some of the ministers of abuses. They do this with as little regard to the feelings of the country as to her interest, and they produce by this act, which they say is done for the preservation of the empire, an unanimity against the Government, after Lord Fitzwilliam produced an unanimity in its favour." Mr Grattan concluded his speech by a sort of personal declaration of war, and defiance of the Government, which threw the House into great confusion, and drew down loud applause from the strangers' galleries. The motion was rejected by a majority of more than three to one. The ministerial members set their sails to catch the opposite breeze which blew Lord Camden over, and without the least shame opposed everything they had just before been supporting with all the glow of conscious patriotism. On the 4th of May 1795, Grattan moved the second reading of the bill for Catholic emancipation. His arguments were conclusive, but the bill was rejected by a majority of 155 to 48. The right and the glory of the day were one side, and, as so often happens, numbers on the other. Never was Grattan so brilliant; never had his blows been dealt around with a wider range and more terrible effect, and the consciousness that the cause had been sold lent desperation to his eloquence.



One concession was gained this year, and it is very doubtful if it was a wise one. Maynooth was founded for the education of Roman Catholic priests; but this was only done in the vain hope of making the priesthood loyal, and with the opposite result of making it "national," in the Irish sense of the term. It was impossible that native pastors, taken from and nurtured in the midst of the people, could be attached to a government under the sanction and with the aid of which their flocks were oppressed, sheared by the tithe proctors and farmers, driven by the magistrates, police, and military, persecuted by the Orangemen, and, as a consequence, desperate enough to believe in and stake the little that remained to them on an impossible revolution. The expectation, however, was that by endowing Maynooth with £8000 a-year, the candidates for priesthood would be saved from the infection of French principles; so ignorantly did the Government judge, as if France was not the very place of all others to sicken a Catholic of democracy. With the exception of this measure there was nothing but repression and persecution of the Roman Catholics: to drive them from their homes, throw them into prison without any charge against them, was known and justified as "vigour beyond the law." On the bill being proposed to indemnify magistrates and officers whose zeal had led them to overstep the law, Grattan moved that the judges who had gone on circuit should be summoned to the bar to say if such a bill was necessary. Through all the stages of this and similar measures that followed, Grattan strove for equal justice between Roman Catholic and Protestant, as the only antidote for the revolutionary societies with which the country was now swarming. But an irresistible force, rushing on heedlessly, swept down all opposition of reason towards the abyss into which it was soon to fall with a roar of revolution. "The Bloody Code" as it was termed by Curran, soon passed, and in April 1796 parliament was prorogued highly satisfied with its work. What was Grattan as a true patriot to do,—standing alone, as the wise man often does, and seeing the crowd separate into two extremes,—rejected by both? Was he to turn United Irishman, to correspond with France, to be the owl-like conspirator, fluttering upon errands of darkness and secrecy? He had always flown in the high and daylight regions, and could not change his species. Or was he to join the government party to which the whole representation of the country might now be said to belong; for when we find Grattan with only some twelve or fourteen supporters on great occasions, we must look upon the truly patriotic party as practically extinct. There was neither justice nor right to be had; eloquent to no purpose, convincing in vain, the little band in the debate on *Habeas Corpus* fell to seven. Meantime the great historical events of the time took their course. Tone at length carried his point, the French invasion was attempted, part of the fleet was seen in Bantry Bay: that glimpse is celebrated in one of the most famous of Irish rebellious songs, the exultation of which in a dead failure, as if it had been a grand success, is truly national, but the harmless peasantry of Cork and Kerry made no move; very different would it have been in the north. There the stern Presbyterians would have risen with the Roman Catholics, and the latter would have risked everything they had left to shake off the intolerable oppression to

which they were now subjected. In the debates at this time Grattan attacked the ministry for neglecting the defence of the country, and asserted the loyalty of the Roman Catholics, but it was probably too late to argue thus. Presumed disloyalty had been turned by persecution into a reality. The defender's oath in the beginning of the organisation had included loyalty to the king! What would a modern Ribbonman or Fenian think of that? But arbitrary arrests, plunder, and persecution, had dispelled that remnant of loyalty. General Lake's proclamation was the finishing stroke. Grattan in vain remonstrated with the Government against putting a province under military law; his motion against such desperate measures was only supported by sixteen. Meanwhile, the United Irishmen multiplied; a hundred thousand men, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians, were enrolled in Ireland. A curious relic of this alliance is to be found in the fact that to the present day the Presbyterian peasantry in the north disclaim the title of Protestant, which is understood to apply only to a member of the Church of England. The object of Pitt's government is said to have been to lash the people into open rebellion, and such no doubt was the openly expressed wish of some of Pitt's Irish governors, whose counsels moulded his policy. Mr Beresford declared in the House that he hoped the disloyal might rise, so that they might be met fairly. It is probable that the great minister saw how, over the prostrate insurrection, he might carry his plan of the Union. But for this the crisis might have been adverted. Resolutions were passed in Belfast, in which some of the most compromised men joined, showing the way to peace and renewed loyalty. Grattan and his friends consulted whether they might with safety accept this overture to a conference. If Ponsonby would submit reform and Catholic emancipation again, Emmett and his party were willing to unite for those legitimate objects, and to give up their wilder projects. The question was, whether the small patriotic party that survived in parliament should appear in the light of ambassadors from the disaffected, and state the moderate terms on which they were ready to become loyal subjects. Grattan saw the embarrassment in which such a connection, even though innocent, with what was distinctly unlawful and guilty, might involve himself and his friends; the discredit it might ultimately throw on their policy, and the danger to their persons. He therefore decided against the conference, and advised his friends in that sense. He well knew, too, that Beresford and Clare would listen to no terms. After events showed his wisdom; without any cause for suspicion, he was himself watched and suspected; and if those all-powerful and unscrupulous men had been able to lay a real charge against him, there can be little doubt that his career of public usefulness would have been brought to a termination. Ponsonby's reform proposal was defeated, and so there was an end of all hope of terms; but it afterwards appeared in Emmett's evidence that if reform had been carried in parliament, it was resolved in the rebel council to inform the French directory that the differences with the Government had been adjusted. It being at length evident that nothing could be done to avert civil war, the opposition determined to secede. Mr Grattan announced this intention in his speech on reform. Speaking of America as a historical warning he said :—"I cannot banish



from my memory the lesson of the American war. . . . If that lesson has no effect on ministers, surely I can suggest nothing that will. We have offered you our measure, you will reject it; we deprecate yours, you will persevere; having no hopes left to persuade or to dissuade, and having discharged our duty, we shall trouble you no more, and after this day shall not attend the House of Commons." Out of parliament the voice of the people was stifled; county meetings were prohibited and prevented by military force. What therefore remained for Grattan to do, but to retire from public affairs, and allow events to work themselves out. In a meeting of the freeholders of Dublin, his conduct was fully approved; in his reply he stated his reasons for retiring. He also published "a letter to his fellow-citizens," in which he epitomised the history of Ireland, and drew upon himself the fury of the Irish Government. His first retreat was Castle Connell, a watering place on the banks of the Shannon; after deriving some benefit from the waters he returned to Tinnehinch. Meanwhile, the rebellion was developing; arrests, trials, and executions going on. An incident, which we will relate in Mr Grattan's own words, nearly involved him afterwards in serious consequences; it was the visit to Tinnehinch of Neilson, one of the leading rebels, accompanied by the spy Hughes, who was probably set on by Government to implicate him in the insurrection.

"I was in my study, and Neilson was shown up along with a Mr Hughes, whom I did not know. They complained very much of the excesses in the north of Ireland, and of the murders of the Catholics; and I remember the phrase used by the anti-Catholics was, 'to Connaught or to hell with you!' They stated their numbers to be very great, and I then asked, 'How does it come then, that they are always beat?' I did not ask the question with a view to learn their force, as the examination would lead one to believe, but in consequence of these two individuals boasting of the numbers of those men who could not protect themselves. Hughes then went down stairs, and Neilson asked me to become a United Irishman. I declined. He produced the constitution and left it in the room. This was nothing new; I had seen it long before, and it was generally printed and published. Hughes then returned, and they both went away. That was the entire transaction to which so much importance was attached." Grattan, we are informed by his son, had a very poor opinion of the United Irishmen, and was by them feared and disliked. But although he kept clear of any real connection with the rebels, the times were such that this was not enough to secure the safety of an opponent of Government. Against the illegal organisation of the insurgents, much more violent and ruffianly bands were formed of the loyal, who without authority attacked and plundered the houses of those who fell under their displeasure or suspicion. Witnesses were ready to inculcate any obnoxious individual. "Will nobody swear against Grattan?" was the cry of the castle hangers-on. There were several alarms at Tinnehinch. Mr Blackwood (afterwards Lord Dufferin) advised him to go to England with his family, as he was watched, and the times were dangerous. Grattan at first refused to stir; but fortunately, the trial of Arthur O'Connor, in which he was required to give evidence, obliged him to go over to Maidstone. While

the loyalists, yeomanry, and ancient Britons plundered and alarmed, the rebels in many instances forced into their ranks gentlemen of position, who, though perfectly innocent, were in several cases summarily executed. Mr Grattan was saved from the latter danger, but in his absence several attacks were made by the yeomanry on Tinnehinch House, and Mrs Grattan was at last obliged to leave home and join her husband at Llanrwst in Wales. It was the opinion of those who could judge best, that had Grattan returned he would certainly have been put to death. When in London, he was much in the society of Fox, Sheridan, and the opposition. On one occasion, owing to a supposed reference to him, in a letter which fell into the hands of Government, he was arrested and brought before the privy council; the mistake was of course explained.

Notwithstanding the serious danger of doing so, Grattan was obliged to return to Ireland for a few days, in consequence of the appearance of an insulting pamphlet, by Dr Duigenan, for which he in vain sought satisfaction, the doctor proving himself a coward, like most traducers and bullies. The opportunity of paying a hasty and almost secret visit to Tinnehinch, was too tempting to be foregone, but whilst he was there, two soldiers rode up to the door, and insolently summoned him out. Grattan garnished his table with pistols, and sent an invitation to them by the servant, who probably intimated the fare that awaited them, for they rode off. On his return to England, Grattan learned that Hughes, the spy, who had visited him with Neilson, now gave evidence that he had been sworn in at Tinnehinch, on the 28th of April, when Grattan had been in England. This charge was embodied in the report to the lords of the committee on the conspiracy, but Mr Foster, the Speaker, would not allow it to be entered on the books of the House of Commons.

The perjury of Hughes was fully exposed by Neilson himself. It seemed that Fitzgibbon had made every effort in Neilson's examination, to implicate Grattan. In this, it is obvious, he did not succeed, as he took no proceedings against him, though by a privileged libel he managed to involve him in the discredit attached to disloyalty. His name was struck off the roll of the Privy Council; he was disfranchised by the corporation of Dublin, the guild of merchants, and the corporation of Derry, and his picture was taken down from the walls of the university of Dublin. Grattan felt so high above all imputation, and the charge itself as against him was so absurd, that he does not seem to have been much mortified by the loss of his well-earned honours; but he was importuned by his friends to take some step to refute the charge. Mr Erskine, whom he consulted, advised silence, but Grattan was very naturally unwilling to let it remain against him, without putting a denial on record in history. To simple denial, however, he confined himself, because, as he said in a letter to Mr Fox, he would not publish a refutation, "lest it should appear abjuring a discomfited party in Ireland, who have been driven into the measures they adopted by the real criminals of the country, the ministers."

Mr Grattan's health was much injured by the anxiety of this period, and the various circumstances connected with his country and himself, which could not fail to prey on less morbid spirits than his were. Now,



there was a new cause of anxiety; the policy of the Government began to declare itself plainly; Ireland was at the feet of the ministry; her true friends, unable to defend the constitution they had won, some in prison on suspicion, some on charges too true; Grattan almost proscribed; there was no one to interfere—and the measure of the union was determined upon. This was enough to make Grattan face any danger; he at once returned to Ireland, but his health did not allow him to take a part in the first scenes of the great struggle, in which, by slender majorities, the assaults of the Government were repelled.

Towards the close of 1799, Grattan returned to Ireland in broken health, and at first was obliged to resist the pressure of his friends to make him re-enter parliament; but on the offer of a seat for Wicklow, he allowed himself to be put in nomination. He was unequal to attend, but was elected in his absence. The writ was delayed by the Government to the last moment. It was only by holding the election after twelve o'clock at night, on the 15th of January 1800, that he could be in time to take part in the decisive debate. At five o'clock in the morning, a loud knocking at the door of the house where he was lying ill in Dublin, announced the messenger with news of his election. He was little in a mood to rejoice. "Why will they not let me die in peace?" he said, as he heard the messenger arrive. He never could speak of the union; the mention or the thought of it drove him frantic. Mrs Grattan told him he must get up immediately, and go down to the house; and after he had started in a sedan chair, wrapt in a blanket, and armed with pistols, a friend came in with the comforting intelligence, that should assassination be attempted, his friends would come forward to help him. Mrs Grattan's reply was, "My husband cannot die better than in defence of his country."

For many hours the great battle had been raging, on which depended the fate of a legislature. At seven o'clock in the morning it was still proceeding; Bushe and Plunket had illuminated the debate with speeches, reckoned among their greatest. The House was worn out with excitement, and the debate almost exhausted, when, as the first ghostly ray of daylight struggled in, there was a whisper that Grattan was elected; the opposition could scarcely credit the strange news; the government relied upon its precautions to delay their greatest enemy. Suddenly Ponsonby and Moore went out, and immediately after the doors were opened, and pale and worn, like a spectre, Grattan entered, supported by his two friends. The whole house rose as he tottered to the table, and took the oaths. As in '82, he wore the uniform of the volunteers, but that alone remained: his power, their power, were gone. He was obliged to speak sitting; but his speech, which lasted two hours, had all the fire and rapid vehemence of former years; his own blade was keen as of yore, and a few battle-worn comrades stood by him still, but the army of patriots, which had once filled the benches he spoke from, had long melted away; not even their ghosts returned, as his seemed to have done, called up by this final emergency. Mr Corry was chosen to reply, which he did in a very insulting manner; and, when Grattan spoke in subsequent debates, the intention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to involve him in a duel became more and more obvious. It was known that a pistol club

had been formed at the castle, to get rid of troublesome opponents; each had chosen his man, and Corry, formerly a friend and visitor at Tinnehinch, and a writer of adulatory verses, had chosen his former patron. Grattan's strength was now tolerably restored, and a good attack upon the government, in which his invective almost annihilated Corry, greatly helped to set him up. It was the third time this member of the government had ventured to assail him. The first time he had been too ill to reply; the second he had no opportunity; this was the third. Mr Bushe said he never saw such an electrifying castigation; of course it would be inadmissible in a modern House of Commons, but such invective was allowed in the days of bull-baiting and duelling. We can only quote a few sentences of this celebrated speech.

"Has the gentleman done? Has he completely done? He was unparliamentary from the beginning to the end of his speech. There was scarce a word he uttered, that was not a violation of the privilege of the House; but I did not call him to order, because the limited talents of some men render it impossible for them to be severe and parliamentary at the same time. On any other occasion I should think myself justified in treating with silent contempt anything which might fall from the honourable member; but there are times when the insignificance of the accuser is lost in the magnitude of the accusation. I know the difficulty the honourable gentleman laboured under, when he attacked me, conscious that, on a comparative view of our characters, public and private, there is nothing he could say could injure me. The public would not believe the charge. I despise the falsehood. If such a charge were made by an honest man, I would answer it in the manner I shall do before I sit down. But I shall first reply to it when not made by an honest man.

"The right honourable gentleman has called me an 'unimpeached traitor.' I ask, why not traitor, unqualified by an epithet? I will tell him. It was because he dare not. It was the act of a coward, who has raised his arm to strike, but has not courage to give the blow. I will not call him villain, because it would be unparliamentary, and he is a privy councillor. I will not call him fool, because he happens to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. But I say he is one who has abused the privilege of parliament and freedom of debate, to the uttering language which, if spoken out of the House, I should answer only with a blow. I care not how high his situation, how low his character, how contemptible his speech, whether a privy councillor or a parasite, my answer would be—a blow!" A duel followed, and Corry was wounded in the hand at the first fire. The sheriffs were on the ground, but were held back by force, and the large crowd which witnessed the meeting vehemently applauded Grattan's victory. The result of this encounter was to damp the ardour of the gentlemen attached to the Castle, who having sold their honour, did not see the reasonableness of sacrificing their lives. Bribery was a safer weapon than the pistol, and the Government devoted a million sterling to this patriotic purpose. The consequence was, that what had been for a time a slender majority against the bill, dwindled into a considerable minority, and Grattan and his party finding themselves unable to arrest the course of this literally suicidal measure, resolved to withdraw from



the House, in the proceedings of which they could not honourably take a part. Lord Clare published a violent attack on Grattan and the anti-union party, to which Grattan replied with a vigorous and eloquent defence of himself and the men of '82; this, with his speech on the second reading of the bill, were the last blows dealt by him in that great struggle to preserve Irish nationality. After the passing of the Union Bill he saw no further likelihood of his ever returning to public life, and resigned himself to a quiet and happy life at Tinnehinch. There he studied books and nature, as they are most enjoyable, both together, and kept up a pleasant intercourse with those old friends who had retired from political life at the same time, "with safe consciences but with breaking hearts." Lord Fitzwilliam made him a pressing and most gratifying offer of a seat in the English parliament, but his feelings at the time would not admit of his accepting it. But as years passed by, and the transference of the centre of the national life from Ireland to England became too familiar to excite an emotion, and new subjects of political importance arose, and old questions survived, the interest that had once appeared to be destroyed began to revive, particularly his interest in the question of the emancipation of Roman Catholics. The Union had been carried by their benevolent neutrality; the English parliament was sure to be more liberal, and less anti-Roman, than a parliament elected by the Protestant minority of Ireland, and in con-  
vinving at the loss of national independence, they had none of their own to lose, and were naturally maliciously pleased to see the ascendancy stripped of its sole legislative power. An understanding was come to with Mr Pitt that they were to obtain emancipation as the price of their country's independence; but perfidy is often, as it proved in this case, its own reward. Pitt found that the king's opposition was invincible, and not being able to carry out his engagement resigned, on the question to return to power immediately after disencumbered of his promises. The Irish members meanwhile were without a leader, and had not yet got over the strangeness and humiliation of being an influential contingent in the imperial parliament, after having been accustomed to the sole conduct of national affairs. Some had proved failures; it was considered extremely important to find some one who could rally them in a national sense. Fox and Fitzwilliam again pressed Grattan to enter parliament; he was the only Irishman of the first order of genius who could at once take the place they desired, and this time he did not refuse. Early in 1805 he was elected for Malton. Mr Pitt, who had entered into an engagement never again to bring forward the Roman Catholic claims, had refused to present their petition; it devolved therefore on Fox and the opposition. It was in the debate that arose on the petition that Mr Grattan made his first appearance in the English House. In a strange atmosphere of thought and feeling, utterly different from that of the assembly to which he had been habituated, with the failure of others to daunt him, speaking under the cloud of prejudice, and before a jury of the greatest orators and in a critical assembly accustomed to the best speaking, Grattan had everything against him. Apart from the cause he advocated, it was felt that it was necessary for the honour of Ireland that her great orator should succeed in the English House; those who doubted his complete

triumph, had for this reason been opposed to his entering the imperial legislature, lest by not establishing there his great reputation, Ireland herself should be humiliated. This feeling was freely expressed to him, and had probably prevented his accepting Lord Fitzwilliam's first offer; it now threw upon him a sense of responsibility which must have been a serious disadvantage and would have greatly impeded the natural extempore flow of eloquence in any one less naturally eloquent. But Grattan, like the poet who "lisp'd in numbers," had only to speak to be eloquent, and one fortunate circumstance was that Dr Duigenan preceded him; no finer contrast could have been chosen, no easier target for his shafts, no better whetting stone for his tongue. When Grattan, small, ungainly, unmelodious, began his speech, Pitt sat impassively with his face resting upon his hand. The House watched him, the speaker proceeded; Dr Duigenan, whose verbose ill-nature had tired and annoyed his audience, now occupied his attention: he thus summed him up:—"His speech consists of four parts. First, an invective uttered against the religion of the Catholics; second, an invective uttered against the present generation; third, an invective uttered against the past; and fourth, an invective against the future. Here the limits of creation interposed and stopped the number. It is to defend these different generations and their religion that I rise—to rescue the Catholics from his attack, and the Protestants from his defence." Then Mr Pitt involuntarily cried, "Hear! hear! hear!" and the applause ran out to meet him from the whole House. As the speaker proceeded it grew more enthusiastic, and both sides of the House united to the end in loudly applauding. Pitt turned to the member who sat by him and said, "Burke told me that Grattan was a great man for a popular assembly, and now I believe it." Perhaps this complete success of his first attempt in an assembly which could not possibly have been pleased by a style formed solely to please Irish taste, was partly due to those old evenings when the student in the Temple listened to the great orators of England, and became familiarised with the English school of eloquence. It may also be said that the distinction had not then become so marked between Celtic and Teutonic public speaking as it has in our times. Of course the Whig party were highly pleased at the success their new champion had achieved. On the death of Pitt, Lord Granville and Fox came into power, and the Duke of Bedford went to Ireland as viceroy. But the expectations which this change inspired in Ireland were doomed to disappointment. Grattan again in 1806 refused office, as in 1782 and 1795, but (along with Fox himself) he was restored to the privy council: "to be consulted, not considered," was all he asked or would accept. His policy for Ireland, had he been allowed to carry it out, would have been far too decided for the English Whigs, and without being able to do so, he would not be responsible for the policy of Government, while to the utmost of his power he would endeavour to influence it. Fox was not destined to retain power for long; he died in September of the same year. He was a true friend, and a great loss to Ireland. A general election ensued; Lord Fitzwilliam offered Grattan an English seat in the new parliament as in the last; but he preferred to stand as a candidate for the city of Dublin; and he was elected with Mr Robert



Shaw for his colleague. The Roman Catholics subscribed £4,000, to defray the expenses of his election, but Mrs Grattan, to whom, in the absence of her husband, the offer was referred, refused, with Mr Grattan's concurrence, to accept it. Mr Grattan incurred some odium as well, for supporting the arms and insurrection acts, which he considered necessary, as for refusing in 1807 to present the Roman Catholic petition, his ground being, that the parliament was untried, and it would be unwise to proceed in ignorance of the disposition of the new House. In those days, when a great proportion of the lower House represented, not the people, but the House of Lords, it was impossible to analyse its constituent parts beforehand, so accurately as it is in our own times—when, from public addresses and pledges, the exact opinions of every candidate are known upon almost every vital subject, and the probable course of legislation could be worked out like a problem in mathematics only given the initiative of the leaders of ministry and opposition. Then more depended on individual men, than on the broad streams of public opinion. Mr Grattan was therefore wise in advising the Roman Catholics to hold back for a while, and to leave the time for bringing it on at the discretion of their leaders in parliament. This advice, however, was not acted upon, and the result proved its wisdom. Mr Grattan dreaded that the question, if determinately put in the mid-stream of politics at that time, would be the rock on which the Whig party would wreck itself. Such was exactly the event. The Whigs were forced to take up the question. Lords Grenville and Grey had succeeded Fox; in March 1807, they introduced a bill to admit Roman Catholics to commissions in the army. After it had been read the first time, the king sent for his ministers, and, after insisting on the abandonment of the measure, required a written pledge that they would recommend no concessions of the kind. This ridiculous pledge which had been taken by Pitt, they honourably refused. The minister was dismissed, and Mr Perceval came into power, on a cry of "No Popery," which is stupid and Philistinish enough to be very successful with British mobs, and in vestry politics. On a motion censuring the imposition of pledges by the king, two Irishmen, Grattan and Plunket, made the great speeches of the occasion; but although the House was united in sentiment, the previous question was carried. Another censure upon the king for changing his advisers was defeated by only a moderate majority; but a dissolution of parliament followed. The king and No Popery brought in a great majority, and Lord Grey's motion, condemning the dissolution, was defeated by 350 to 155. In fact, the Whig party was almost annihilated. Mr Grattan, at this time, incurred great unpopularity, by supporting the new ministry in those measures of repression in which he had supported their predecessors. The consequence was the same as in former times, when he provoked the hostility of the volunteers, by the same disinterested and independent rectitude of conduct. This honourable and manly course was, in the latter instance, fully appreciated, and gained him the respect and reverence of all capable of appreciating dignity and independence in a public character,—the last and perfect test of patriotism which stamps it as genuine, and distinguishes the true patriot from the spurious, to be superior to the love of popularity. This is the crown of Mr Grattan's

record, that he was devoted to the service of his country ; and while he fought her battles, and was repaid with her applause, he could turn and rebuke her crimes, and scorn her capricious humours. A question that arose in his management of the Roman Catholic claims affords another instance of the same. But before turning to this, we may say that not only by his being under the sole government of conviction and principle, but by his great prudence and good taste, he acquired a very peculiar, and indeed unexampled position, in the imperial parliament. He seldom spoke ; his eloquence was most suited for great occasions, and he reserved it for such ; but when he did address the House, he was listened to with a remarkable respect, and the curious custom prevailed in the House, at least among the Irish members, though one authority speaks of it as general, of giving to him as to the Speaker, the title of "Sir." Possibly there was some feeling combined with the respect which his character deserved, that he was the most illustrious man of another country and a lost parliament.

The first proof the new parliament gave of fidelity to the "no-popery" principle upon which it was returned, was a reduction of the Maynooth grant. Mr Grattan's opposition to this piece of shabbiness was of course ineffectual. The struggle was at this period very uphill, and Mr Grattan was weary, though he never fainted. "The debates of the House of Commons fatigue me. I take, however, little part in them, and when I do speak, the speeches don't appear ; so that it makes little difference." Age too was creeping on the young templar, who forty years before had breathlessly watched the great joust, and burned to be down there among the contending heroes of debate. A new element was now introduced into the Roman Catholic question, in the royal veto upon the person chosen to a bishopric, which Mr Grattan considered he was authorised to propose to the House, as a concession in return for, and a safeguard upon, emancipation. He moved on this (May 1808), that the Roman Catholic claims should be referred to a committee of the House, but his motion was rejected by a majority of 153, in a House of 409. The proposal was then disclaimed by Dr Milner, the agent of the Roman Catholics, who representing ten Irish prelates, had instructed Mr Grattan to make the offer. On finding that it would not be accepted, they repented of the humiliation of having made it. Mr Grattan had been very cautious, and had only stated that there was such an offer, though Ponsonby had gone further, and given the authority. The fact is, Mr Grattan was as decidedly opposed to this, as he was to paying the Roman Catholic clergy. He did not wish to make Government easy by degrading religion ; and he was of opinion that the attempt would succeed in the latter respect and fail in the former. At a general meeting of the Irish Roman prelates the proposal was decisively negatived. The abortive proposition was injurious to the cause, and during 1809 nothing more was done in it. The only important episode of Mr Grattan's parliamentary life in that year, was the part he took in the attack on Lord Castlereagh, for the corrupt sale of an Indian writership. It was a great opportunity for revenge. This corruption which he had in this instance used for his personal advantage, he had learned in overthrowing the house of which Grattan was the pillar. But instead of taking advantage of the opportunity, Grattan



with a noble chivalry declined. Lord Castlereagh was deeply sensible of his generosity; and we may here notice as another touching trait of the same noble chivalry of nature, his charge, when dying, to his son:—"If you get into the House of Commons, I must beg of you not to attack Lord Castlereagh. The Union has passed. The business between him and me is over, and it is for the interests of Ireland that Lord Castlereagh should be minister. I must again request of you not to attack him unless he attacks you, and I make it my dying request." In 1809 and again in 1810 Mr Grattan supported Mr Parnell's proposition for a committee upon the tithe question, which he had himself been unsuccessful in attempting to settle in the Irish parliament, though he framed the settlement afterwards adopted. In both years the committee was refused. In the latter year he again brought forward the Roman Catholic question. Domestic nomination was substituted for the veto as a concession to what was really the anti-catholic doctrine, but was technically the anti-foreign-interference view. Mr Grattan's reply was particularly able; but the majority was dispiritingly heavy, being 104. But yet those great speeches of Grattan and Plunket, which seemed to be quite lost under such an overwhelming adverse majority, were building up the future success. They were as the great loads of granite buried in the sea to form the foundation for a breakwater of a haven; the sea seems to swallow them all up, its empire still unbroken, until at last the rampart rises to the surface, and it is shown that past labour was not in vain. This is the comfort of the unsuccessful statesman, who knows he is right; for one really patriotic it is enough. In 1811 the majority against the Roman Catholic claims was 63. Mr Perceval replied sharply to Mr Grattan's speech, and the latter showed that he had not lost the bitter power under which Flood, Corry, and Castlereagh had felt such bitter pangs. It was only modified to suit a more courtly assembly.

It was necessary long before success could be achieved for that one-fifth of the population whose right to a political recognition Mr Grattan advocated, that something more than words, however powerful, should be thrown into the deep sea of opposition on the ministerial side. To effect the moving of a great political change to which England is averse, a strong *pou sto* is required in the shape of agitation. This truth was recognised by the Irish Roman Catholics, and accordingly it was resolved to call together a convention to petition parliament. Except for this purpose the assembly would have been unlawful under the Convention Act. The Government, however, acted on this being only a colourable pretence. Lord Fingal and two other delegates were arrested on the chief justice's warrant. Of course such a proceeding excited very strong feelings on both sides, and in the end helped forward the cause of emancipation. In 1812 Mr Grattan presented the petition of the Roman Catholics and moved for a committee. On this occasion he thought it necessary to allude to the unexpected opposition of the Prince Regent, who had approved of the arbitrary proceedings of his Irish Government, and thrown his influence, with what threatened to be hereditary perversity, into the scale of the party of bigotry. He compared the promise of the Prince to "the leading light that cheered their painful steps through the wilderness, until they came

to the borders of the land of promise, when, behold ! the vision of royal faith vanishes." An insulting allusion in the resolutions of an aggregate meeting to the influence which it was supposed had rendered the Prince hostile to the Roman Catholic claims, did great injury to the cause. In December 1812 Grattan assembled his friends who were the advocates of emancipation, at Tinnehinch, to prepare a bill. Plunket, Burton, Burrowes, and Wallace were there. The bill prepared by these friends in council was, as it afterwards passed, considerably modified. Mr Grattan considered success was near. When the new parliament met in February 1813 (Grattan had been returned for Dublin a fourth time the preceding October) he proposed that the Roman Catholic claims should be considered. After two nights' debate the motion was carried by 40 votes. His resolution declaratory of the character of the measure was also carried. The bill was brought in; in May it came on for a second reading. Some of the clauses, however, did not please the Roman Catholics; their disapproval was made use of by the opponents of the bill, and the Speaker's proposition to omit the principal clause allowing Roman Catholics to sit in parliament was carried by four votes through the intrigues of the Prince Regent, who thus had revenge for the allusion to "fatal witchery." The bill was in consequence withdrawn. Grattan was extremely dispirited. He feared the future of the measure being imperilled by violence, and he foresaw with an instinct that in a statesman of his experience is sometimes almost an acquired power of prophecy, that when the bill should ultimately be carried, it would be followed by the extinction of the forty shilling freeholders. In 1815 Mr Grattan gave another proof of his fearless independence of action by refusing to present the Roman Catholic petition, if tied down by the instructions of the board, which had become extremely dictatorial. In consequence, the petition was entrusted to Mr Parnell, and the connection ceased for a time between Grattan and the Roman Catholics. In this year he made a most successful speech on the question of war and peace, which completely refuted the assertion that the fire of his eloquence was going out. It caught the temper of the House and was rapturously cheered. The applause was compared to that caused by Pitt's great speech on the peace of Amiens. This gained him considerably increased weight with the English public. In May 1815, after considerable blundering, Sir Henry Parnell brought forward the petition and moved for a committee. His bad management, and the unqualified demands of the Roman Catholic board, and perhaps a sense of the ingratitude that had been shown to Mr Grattan, as well as want of moderation and good taste, made many supporters of emancipation declare they would stay away from the debate. Mr. Grattan dissuaded them, and when it came on, rose to support the motion, saluted by great applause. He condemned the application for unqualified concession. He claimed to have supported the claims of the petitioners "with a desperate fidelity;" without conciliation, however, there was no hope of success, but he would vote for the committee. The motion was rejected by a majority of 81. Next year Mr Grattan was deputed to present the petition of some of the leading Roman Catholics, but the motion founded on it was again rejected, with however a lessened



majority; so again in the next year. He was now evidently failing, but with the "desperate fidelity," which he had claimed to the cause of emancipation, the remnant of his powers was devoted to it still. Sir James Mackintosh wrote of "poor Grattan's last exhibition of his setting genius, and of that gentle goodness which will glow till the last spark of life be extinguished." His refusal to support the unqualified repeal of the window tax in 1818, led to that brutal assault upon him in which he was near being thrown into the Liffey. As it was, he was severely cut by a missile, which he caught and tossed back into the base and cowardly crowd. The greatest indignation was felt at this outrage, and much affectionate feeling shown in addresses of sympathy. Under whatever superficial unpopularity, there is generally a deep store of genuine love and veneration for men like Grattan. In the following year he made his last appeal for his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. He was very anxious for the future, and the following short account of a conversation with his friends Burrowes and Berwick, contains something perhaps of unfulfilled prophecy.

"I fear that some time or other this question will be fatal. It will make the Irish people distrustful, and never place any confidence in England. The people take no interest in the imperial parliament. It is too far and its remedies too late. If taxes increase and jobs continue, and trade does not flourish, I doubt that the Union will hold. It has sunk the country, and I do not see any good resulting from it. The best of our people have become absentees, and Dublin is ruined. Ireland held up her head formerly, but she is now a beggar at the door of Great Britain." Then striking his forehead, he exclaimed, as in anguish, "There is no thinking of it, but these countries from their size must stand together, united *quoad* nature, distinct *quoad* legislation."

His last speech in the Catholic cause was the usual motion for a committee, and in the division the adverse majority was but two. For twenty years, fifteen of which were in the English parliament, he had fought this battle, through evil report and good report, from middle life to old age. It seemed certain that in the next division the cause would be successful, although in reality, as we shall see in Plunket's memoir, it did not prove so. In the autumn of 1819 Mr Grattan caught cold and his breathing became much affected. Through the winter he was worse, but spring revived him. He rejoiced once more in the exquisite beauty of nature's resurrection; he was soothed by the soft airs; but he knew that his days were numbered, and determined to give the end of his life to his fellow-countrymen. A consultation was held by his physicians, and they forbade him to go to parliament, and made him understand that the consequences would be fatal. He nevertheless desired Parnell to give notice that he would bring on the Roman Catholic question on the 10th of May. He became worse. Once more he was wheeled round his grounds. He said "it gives me pleasure to go round it and see the old spots, and revisit even for the last time, the place of my younger days; thirty-six years since I came here." He received the consolations of religion humbly; his friends, Bushe, Plunket, Burrowes, and Berwick, came to bid him goodbye. The separation of these great men was affecting. Everyone tried to dissuade him from going over to parliament, but he would go. He managed to reach

London; he was agitated in leaving Ireland; the quays were lined with people who cheered him as he embarked. Mortification, which had set in upon the journey, proceeded rapidly. When told it would cost him his life to go to the House, he repeated twice, "*It is a good death.*" At length the impossibility became apparent; he resigned himself to the great disappointment of not actually employing his last breath in the cause. He desired to be buried in the churchyard of Moyanna in the Queen's County, the property which the people of Ireland had given him in '82; but when the desire was strongly expressed that the Abbey should be the place of his repose, he gave his consent to Westminster. After adding to the paper which his son had written for him on the Catholic question, "I die with the love of liberty in my heart, and this declaration in favour of my country in my hand," asking that it should be read in the House by Plunket, to whom he bequeathed the cause of emancipation, he called his family about him, and expired. Thus passed away one of the gentlest and best spirits of his own, or indeed, of any day; and there does not sleep, in the old Abbey, a really greater man.

## DENIS DALY.

BORN A.D. 1738.—DIED A.D. 1791.

MR DALY was a man of good family and position, and one of those able speakers who make the history of the last fifty years of the Irish parliament of such illustrious memory. He entered the House of Commons in 1769, and continued in parliament up to the time of his death. In 1778 he moved an address to the King for the removal of the embargo, and his speech on this occasion raised him to a level with those great men who supported him—Grattan, Yelverton, Fitzgibbon. In the sessions of 1780 and 1781 he also took a distinguished part, but not so honourable; for having accepted the office of Muster-master with a salary of £1,200 a year, he spoke in the former year against Irish independence. He had said himself, alluding to Mr Burgh, to whom the remark proved inapplicable, that the Treasury Bench resembled the grave—it levels all distinctions. "If I live I shall answer it," said Mr Burgh, and not long afterwards he might have done so with bitter effect. After attaching himself to the government Mr Daly seldom spoke; and, when he did so, briefly. His eloquence was described as producing the effect of a succession of electric shocks. His sentences were each perfect in itself, and had a point of its own. This is the characteristic of carefully prepared speaking, and Daly was said to take much pains with his speeches. Although his audible part in parliament ceased to a great degree on joining the Government, he still took an active share in the business of the House. It is to his credit that he did not lose the friendship of Grattan, who had a great reliance on his judgment and received from him much private assistance. Nor can the connexion with the Government of a man so honest at heart and truly patriotic in feeling have been without more good effects than we can trace. Grattan described his death as a "prodigious loss," and



thought that, had he lived, his influence with the Government and people might have prevented the insurrection of '98.

# EDMOND SEXTON, LORD PERY.

BORN A.D. 1719.—DIED A.D. 1792.

EDMOND SEXTON PERY was the eldest son of a clergyman, of a respectable Limerick family. He was called to the Irish bar, and rose rapidly in his profession. He was offered and refused the office of Solicitor-General. At the age of thirty-two he entered parliament for Limerick, and soon became distinguished for his eloquence, which was most perfect—of the calm, weighty, large order; but he was still more noted for tact, judgment, and knowledge both of things and men. There were many able politicians in the Irish parliament, but Pery was a statesman among politicians. He was, moreover, in a long period of the foulest corruption, perfectly honest and true to his country. In 1771, Mr John Ponsonby having resigned the speakership, Mr Pery was elected in his stead. His conduct on this occasion, in supporting the Government, was the only act that laid him open to reproach. He continued to fill the position until 1785 with rare ability and discretion. Most of the great measures in favour of the trade and people of Ireland during this interval of fourteen eventful years were either suggested by his advice, or revised and matured by his wisdom. The following is Mr Grattan's description of him:—"He was more or less a party in all those measures which the pamphlet condemns,\* and, indeed, in every great statute and measure which took place in Ireland for the last fifty years. A man of the most legislative capacity I ever knew, and the most comprehensive reach of understanding, with a deep graven impression of public care, accompanied by a temper which was adamant. In his train is every private virtue which can adorn human nature." In his speech at the bar of the Lords, in 1773, he laid the foundation of the freedom of Irish trade. He revised the celebrated document drawn up by Grattan and Daly in 1780, and was the Nestor of the party which won for Ireland a short-lived independence. In all the great questions of the day he was the wise adviser of Grattan and his friends, particularly on those of the corn laws and tithes. In 1785, he resigned the speakership, and was created Viscount Pery, of Pery, near Limerick. Having left no male heir, the title became extinct on his death. After his elevation to the House of Lords, he took little active part in politics.

# THEOBALD WOLFE TONE.

BORN A.D. 1763.—DIED A.D. 1798.

A MEMOIR of Theobald Wolfe Tone is an appropriate preface to the important part of Irish history which has not been fully entered into in the preceding memoirs. It will afford the point of view from which

\* In allusion to Lord Clare's pamphlet.

alone many of its events can be fairly judged of. This gives it a greater importance than it intrinsically possesses, and obliges us to give it at a length disproportionate to the man, though not to his times. In his case we enjoy an advantage which is wanting in writing the memoirs of far more illustrious men, who have left only broken lights of their lives spread over the surface of the past. There is no one distinct reflection, but slight notices scattered up and down through many books, and only to be brought together again by painstaking research, and their lives reconstructed by a kind of comparative process. But in the case of Tone we have the ample biography written by himself and his son; and seldom have the lessons of an awful experience been given with the same effect and reality, or cast more true light upon the events of a troubled time. And here we may premise that, having to use Tone as the exponent of so much evil, and to treat him almost entirely with reference to what is worst in his life, there is necessarily some injustice in the representation. Tone was a scholar, a man of the warmest and kindest nature, overflowing with goodness, gaiety, and all the social qualities that make a delightful companion in their greatest perfection. Even as we look at his portrait the noble-souled and beautiful face wins upon us, and deprecates our blame. His misguided patriotism was sincere; it was simply perverted by the errors of his nature. Sensitively alive to influences, full of passion, pride, love of adventure, impatient of the sober and trite pursuits of life,—ingenuous, quick, and speculative, while superficial, he was just the man who, according to his walk in life, would be the projector, the visionary, or the plain scamp. He had with this disposition the misfortune to be early mixed up with persons, scenes, and actions, most likely to unsteady a youth with a passion for adventure, and to give it a dangerous direction. We wish to enter such pleas, and to endorse such endearing praise as his contemporaries bestowed upon him most emphatically, as we are about to trace him through much that is to be condemned, showing imprudence, want of principle, and perversion of the moral sense.

His early life has a romantic interest. His father inherited a small leasehold property near Naas, in the county of Kildare, and when it fell into his hands, being in good business as a coachmaker in Dublin, he let it to a younger brother, and this unfortunately gave rise to a litigation which ended in his ruin. He had several children, all remarkable for the same restless temper we have described in the eldest. Their history, as related by Theobald, is very illustrative of the family characteristic. He speaks of their vagrant turn, and not being like other people, but having all a wild spirit of adventure. Having been sent to a school kept by a Mr Darling, he showed, by strong desultory efforts prompted by the love of distinction, notwithstanding much idleness, that he possessed very unusual talents. The schoolmaster advised his father to send him to the university, where he would be sure to obtain a fellowship. This view was sustained, he informs us, by the parson of the parish, who was sometimes his examiner, and was struck by his progress in Euclid. It having thus been determined that he was to be a fellow, he was removed to a school kept in Henry Street by the Rev. William Craig. Here he found that he could perform the week's tasks in three days, and having entered into a conspiracy with the other senior boys,



this plan was generally adopted, and was either permitted by or imposed upon the master. This habit of "mitching" prevented his progress in mathematics from being equal to its promise; and the studies which were paid for out of his father's poverty were deserted for field-days and reviews in the Phoenix Park. To this Tone traces "the untamable desire which I have ever since had to become a soldier." The consequence was that, as the time for his entrance to the university drew nigh, his aversion to a student's life increased, and he began to exhibit an obstinate opposition to his father's wishes. A violent quarrel with his poor father was the consequence, and this is recorded in the following characteristic manner:—"My father was as obstinate as I, as he utterly refused to give me any assistance to follow my scheme." When this shameless sentence was written, the writer knew that his father, in his own great distress, had made a heavy sacrifice in bringing out his promising talents, and was afflicted and incensed at the profligate use which had been made of his kindness. The father was "obstinate," and the son, who had thus outparalleled the prodigal in the parable, was compelled to sit down to his studies "with a bad grace," and with some exertion entered the university in his eighteenth year, under Dr Matthew Young. This gave a new impulse to his excitable temper, and he prepared with industry for his first examination. In this, too, his evil star prevailed. "I happened," he says, "to fall into the hands of an egregious dunce, one —, who, instead of giving me the premium, which, as the best answerer, I undoubtedly merited, awarded it to another." This gave an unhappy recoil to the vain and irritable mind of Tone. He urged his father to equip him as a volunteer for the American war. "He refused me as before, and, in revenge, I would not go near the college, or open a book that was not a military one. In this manner we continued for about a twelvemonth on very bad terms, as may well be supposed, without either party relaxing an inch from their determination." The full merit of these sentences will not be appreciated by the reader unless he bears in mind that they are deliberately composed records written sixteen years after, for the amusement of his own children. In whatever degree he may have attained the honours bestowed by the university, we are assured by his contemporaries that his wit was unrivalled by any of the persons of his time, whose names are handed down as celebrated for this quality. His diary abounds in fancies, grave or gay, according to his mood, and runs in a profuse stream of sarcasm, humour, fun, and levity. Such powers and a light accommodating good-nature, combined with the peculiar charm which can be seen in his face, and which hangs like a fragrance round such a character, secured him many devoted friends. And it was to the friendships formed in those college days that he was indebted in after times for many serious obligations, which from such men would be very surprising, considering the courses into which he had fallen. Of the remainder of his college course, it will be sufficient to say that, though he had the firmness not to give way to affection or duty, Tone was brought back to his studies by the flattering influence of his friends; and his great talent, notwithstanding the time he had wasted, enabled him to win a scholarship and three premiums. He was more characteristically distinguished by being second in a duel

between two college lads, in which his principal shot his opponent dead. Tone was not prosecuted. After falling violently in love with a lady of rank, to whom his talent for amateur theatricals introduced him, and narrowly escaping a tragical termination of his passion, he became acquainted with a young lady named Witherington, not sixteen years of age, very pretty, living with, and heiress to her grandfather, the Rev. Mr Fanning, who was old and rich. The acquaintance grew to love, and the consent of her friends being refused, Tone eloped with and married her. This step being irrevocable, was soon forgiven on all sides, and in consequence, the idea of a fellowship was abandoned, and the bar adopted instead. Tone graduated in 1786, and resigned his scholarship. Among the honours which his talents had enabled him to obtain without exertion was the post of Auditor in the Historical Society, equivalent to President of the English University Unions. He also obtained medals for distinction in the Society, and delivered one of the closing speeches from the chair, with which the annual session was concluded. From the house of his wife's family he represents himself to have been driven by ill treatment to the home of his father, whose affection seems to have outlived every shock. Here, in 1786, an incident occurred which shows in a high degree the affection and courage of his wife. The house was broken into by six armed men, who bound the whole family and for two hours deliberately pillaged; the alarm was given by a maid-servant who had escaped. When the robbers fled Tone recovered his feet, but was horror-struck at receiving no answer to his calls; for the family in their terror had left the house, and sought a securer refuge. Mrs Tone, finding that her husband had not accompanied their flight, went back alone through the darkness a considerable distance, and released her husband from his bonds, and from his fears that all the family had been murdered. "This terrible scene," he says, "besides infinitely distressing us by the heavy loss we sustained, and which my father's circumstances could very ill bear, destroyed in a great degree our domestic enjoyments. I slept continually with a case of pistols under my pillow, and a mouse could not stir that I was not on my feet."

Notwithstanding the extreme depression of his circumstances, Tone's father managed to scrape together enough money to enable his son to pursue his studies at the Temple. There could not have been a more urgent case to give the exercise of his ability its utmost impulse, than that in which Tone now stood. He was no more a "mitching" schoolboy, whose want of consideration might be excused; he was a husband, a father, and an educated man. The only likeness was the poverty from which were wrung the means of advancing him in his career. The sacrifice was needful, was grateful to his father himself, but demanded one return. With this preface we shall make Tone relate his own story. "I set off for London, leaving my wife and daughter with my father, who treated them during my absence with great affection. After a dangerous passage to Liverpool, wherein we ran some risk of being lost, I arrived in London in January 1787, and immediately entered my name as a student at law on the books of the Middle Temple; *but this I may say was all the progress I ever made in that profession.*" Again, "I was, likewise, amenable to nobody



for my conduct; and, in consequence, I never opened a law book." Tone was, as we have stated, a man of kindly affections and amiable manners; his wife and he lived many years in happiness together; but it is apparent, sense of duty or principle of right and wrong had but the slightest place in his mind. His goodness was the result of strong impulse, but he was inconsiderate, and like all inconsiderate men, could be both unjust and cruel in cold detail. Exceeding levity is prominent throughout, and makes him appear better and worse than the reality. Anxious to extend his resources and maintain the appearance of a gentleman, Tone now exerted his talents, and continued to extract some pounds from periodical literature during his two years sojourn in London. He was still more indebted to the generosity of his associates, from one of whom, John Stevenson Hall, he acknowledges to have received £150 in some pecuniary difficulty. But under all these circumstances neither the life of pleasure he was leading, nor the essential levity of his nature, could conceal from him that something must be done to save a needy man from penury, a vain man from utter shame. In the intervals of dissipation, perhaps, he remembered the claims of his family and the expectations of his friends. He determined on a grand stroke which might place him *per saltum* upon the summit of fortune. This was a scheme to establish a colony in one of Cook's islands in the South Seas, "in order to put a bridle on Spain in time of peace, and to annoy her grievously in that quarter in time of war." In arranging this plan he read all the books which could throw any light on the subject, "and especially the *Buccaniers*, who were my heroes, and whom I proposed to myself as the archetypes of the future colonists." We have only to add, that he intended himself to play the hero after these classical models of his selection. The history of the *Buccaniers* is now not much known, but it is a fearful illustration of all the worst parts of human nature, and cannot be studied without disgust and contamination. But there are ample indications that the wild and lawless freedom, and the reckless spirit of adventure, gave real charms to his own proposal in Tone's eye. He could not, however, get Mr Pitt to see its beauties; in fact, though the project was duly presented to him, the great statesman took no notice of it, and this neglect of his first-born political project was keenly resented by its author. "It was," he says, "my first essay in what I may call politics, and my disappointment made such an impression on me, as is not yet quite obliterated. In my anger, I made something like a vow, that if I ever had the opportunity, *I would make Mr Pitt sorry*, and perhaps fortune may enable me to fulfil that resolution." When the after circumstances of Tone's life are remembered, there is something strangely solemn in this, in which some evil genius would seem to have whispered to his breast. About the same time he received a letter from his father filled with complaints, "which I afterwards," he says, "found were much exaggerated." The immediate effect was to throw him into a state of intense resentment, in which his vindictive feelings against Pitt were for the moment forgotten in rage against his father, whose love he had so ungratefully requited. He resolved to cast away all ties and sacrifice all prospects for the sake of wounding the breast which had so indulgently cherished his wayward youth, and would still protect him from himself.

He resolved to enlist in the India Service. Unfortunately, for it had been better for him, he met with a disappointment. On his arrival at the India house he ascertained that he had come too late for that year, but might be received and sent out on the next. He returned home, and was called to the bar with the purest ignorance of law; but as £500 of his wife's fortune was now paid he laid out £100 in law books, and for some time was assiduous in his attendance at the courts. It is needless to detail the incidents of his legal career; it was short and unproductive, though his natural talent, address, and manner, and the extended acquaintance which he had among the members of the profession, were the means of obtaining greater notice and employment than could fall to most beginners. Feeling a very reasonable despair of professional success, and a still increasing hatred to the study of law, he now decidedly turned his thoughts to politics, and tried his hand upon a pamphlet in defence of the Whig Club. He observes of it in his diary, "Though I was very far from entirely approving of the system, I yet agreed with them as far as they went, though my own private opinions went infinitely farther." His pamphlet had some success, for the Northern Whig Club reprinted it for distribution, and afterwards discovering the author, elected him one of their body. Another consequence was his being retained in a heavy suit with the Ponsonbys, one of whose political connections made very promising overtures to him, and led him to hope for great advantages. In consequence of this he attached himself to the Whig Club for a little time, but he soon found that his expectations were likely to lead to nothing. Beyond the fee of eighty guineas which he had received, Mr George Ponsonby was very civil to him whenever they met, but never said a word on politics. He therefore resolved to abandon this party as hopeless, but he adds, "My mind had now got a turn for politics; I thought I had at last found my element, and I plunged into it with eagerness." This was indeed a discovery for one whose views had already gone "infinitely farther" than the Whigs, and may help to illustrate the great care, study, and deliberation, which had been employed in the formation of those views. We are not indeed long left in doubt as to their nature; he mentions on the same page that he had discovered what he might have found in Swift or Molyneux, "that the influence of England was the radical vice of our Government, and consequently, that Ireland would never be either free, prosperous, or happy, until she was independent, and that independence was unattainable while the connection with England existed. "This theory," he adds, "has ever since directed my political conduct." This was the virtual commencement of Mr Tone's career, and the germ of many woes to him and to his country. It was about the year 1790. We have now traced Tone to the full-grown stature and maturity of his theory. With his newly acquired theory Tone's character seems to change; the folly and insignificance which glitter like froth over the previous pages of his diary seem to be lost in the consciousness of a great congenial purpose. Ireland rose on his imagination in place of the South Sea Islands, and his favourite Buccaneers found a captivating place in the long perspective of an Irish revolution. Those who had slighted his plans or his abilities, were now, he thought, to learn by experience the man



they had lost. But we may be thought to anticipate events whilst thus tracing out the fast flowing tendencies indicated in the preceding pages. "An occasion soon offered," writes Tone, "to give vent to my new opinion. On the appearance of the rupture with Spain, I wrote a pamphlet to prove that Ireland was not bound by the declaration of war, but might and ought to stipulate for a neutrality. In examining this question I advanced the question of separation with scarcely any reserve, much less disguise." The blow was evidently well meant and heartily given, and it cannot be doubted the author expected a result, but he adds, "the public mind was by no means so far advanced as I was, and my pamphlet made not the smallest impression." The pamphlet was nevertheless read by many persons of known public character, and Tone heard some unpalatable truths in his bookseller's shop. We may here, in passing, say that this pamphlet was in a high degree adapted for the suggestion of some of those apprehensions which are said to have led to the Union, and by indicating the views of an extreme party which soon after began to make its appearance, it certainly gave just ground for such fears. At this period he formed a close friendship with a Mr Russel, whose name must often occur in this memoir. For the present, it may be enough to state, that Mr Tone describes his character as being suited to his own by an "identity of sentiment." In the summer of 1790 he took "a little box on the sea-side at Irishtown." Here his family, his friend Russel, and occasionally his brothers, were accustomed to meet. Wit, politics, and conviviality gave a charm to the days they passed together, and to the "delicious dinners, in the preparation of which, my wife, Russel, and myself, were all engaged." There was surely something of a wild unfettered character in those half-gipsy merry-makings, which must have harmonised richly with the bold background of Mr Tone's visions of future glory. During this interval one more chance of realising the favourite day dream of his heart seemed to offer itself. The stormy appearance of a rupture with Spain, and the advice of Russel, induced Mr Tone to renew his suggestions to the British Government on the Buccaniering scheme. The ministers seemed to approve of his plan, which not only showed talent, but indicated a serviceable agent, in case such a design might be adopted. He now received answers of at least a considerate and approving kind, which for a moment awakened his hopes. But the whole came to nothing, and we come to the comment which is happily characteristic,—"if the measures we proposed had been adopted, we were both determined on going out with the expedition, in which case, instead of planning revolutions in our own country, we might be now, perhaps, carrying on a privateering war (for which, I think, we both have talents) on the coast of Spanish America." After a sentence more, he adds, "the minister's refusal did not sweeten us towards him. I renewed the vow I had once before made, to make him, if I could, repent of it, in which Russel most heartily concurred. Perhaps the minister may yet have reason to wish he had let us go off quietly to the South Seas. I should be glad to have an opportunity to remind him of his old correspondent, and if ever I find one, I will not overlook it. I dare say he has utterly forgot the circumstances, but I have not." If there be any value in expression, these are the deep

breathings of the sleuth-hound revenge. Freely as we admit the qualities that left a kindly impression on many good judges of men, we are bound to say that there was no virtue, much less heroism, in the motives which prompted his career; they were rather those of wild romance, and deeply seated revenge, love of active emergency and confusion, with a settled animosity against order and lawful authority. The wrongs of Ireland supplied a cloak of more dignified motives. But this may be said as much in apology as in blame. In 1791, we have the following statement from Mr Tone,—“to subvert the tyranny of our execrable government, to break down the connection with England, the never failing source of all our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country, these were my objects.” For gaining these objects the method stated is the union of all classes of Irishmen. The nature of this union is described indirectly in a few sentences, in which he states his reason for not addressing himself to the Roman Catholics: he says, “I know well that, however it might be disguised or suppressed, there existed in the breast of every Irish Roman Catholic an inextirpable abhorrence of the English name and power.” How far this assertion is calumnious or true is not the immediate consideration. The Church of Rome is not here upon its trial. It is only mentioned to show the animus of the proposed union; it was unnecessary to address the Roman Catholics because they were imbued with the proper spirit already. In 1791 he published a pamphlet under the signature of “a Northern Whig,” purporting to be an argument on behalf of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, in which the whole basis on which he argues is contained in the principles of the French Revolution, and he appeals to that event to obviate the fears that might be felt of the Roman Religion being put in ascendancy by separation, a parallel which the pious Roman Catholics of Ireland would certainly be unwilling to admit. Such was the appeal which first raised Mr Tone to great authority. It was distributed far and wide, new editions were called for, and it was rapidly disseminated through the whole kingdom. It introduced Mr Tone to the principal persons with whom we find him acting during the remainder of his Irish career. “As my pamphlet,” he says, “spread more and more, my acquaintance among the Catholics extended accordingly. My first friend in this body was John Keogh, and through him I became acquainted with all the leaders, as Richard M’Cormack, John Sweetman, Edward Byrne, Thomas Brangnall, in short the whole sub-committee, and most of the active members of the general committee. The volunteers of Belfast, of the first or ‘green’ company, were pleased, in consequence of my pamphlet, to elect me an honorary member of their corps.” He adds, “I was also invited to spend a few days in Belfast in order to assist in framing the first club of United Irishmen.” Mr Tone makes it quite apparent that the Society of United Irishmen was various in the materials of which it was composed, and was headed by men of republican principles; that it branched out with surprising rapidity; and that though its ostensible requisitions and complaints were just and allowable, the sentiments expressed, and the arguments put forth, breathe the spirit of the leading men. This is the main point which the memoir illustrates, and we must for a moment pause to consider it. There was not only at this time a great prevalence of republican



opinions and feelings in the north, and through the volunteers spread through the whole kingdom, where there was intelligence enough for their reception; but there were also the long tradition of insurrection in the people, and the military instincts thus derived. Armed conspiracies were the fertile growth of the soil. The Whiteboy oath of '63 affords a good specimen. Secrecy, preparedness to take up arms at the first summons, fidelity to each other, and military obedience formed the purport of it; but especially it shows the instrumentality of persons of education, and a purpose not fully disclosed to the rank and file of the conspiracy. The same characteristics may be traced in all similar associations, although arising under different names. In Tone's time, republicanism had entered so much into the educated classes that language could be used without exposing them to danger which in other times would have been impossible. Reform was a pretext, and the question of Roman Catholic emancipation was another, for meetings, associations, and the gradual working up of popular excitement. There was nothing but its republicanism to recommend Tone's pamphlet. It said what was widely felt, but what few had the courage to say. He went so far as by many to be reproved for his indiscretion. He mentions being remonstrated with by a Whig barrister, the same who had before retained his services for the Ponsonbys, and his own account of this conference leads to the supposition that Mr Tone would have sold his support if his own terms had been complied with.

We may here briefly state the constitution and general objects of the association of the United Irishmen. It was to have the secrecy and somewhat of the ceremonial of freemasonry. The main instrumentality of the association was to be publications. As it was the object to unite all parties, the oath regarded those ostensible objects which revealed nothing. It pledged to union in pursuit of reform; this was the great pretext well kept up throughout, nearly to the time when all being discovered, it became their apology. Their constitution, according to Dr Macnevin, was the following:—it consisted of societies at first composed of thirty-six members; afterwards they were reduced to twelve. Each society of twelve chose a secretary and generally a treasurer. The secretaries of five societies formed a lower baronial committee, and out of each of these one person was chosen to be a member of the upper baronial committee; it consisted of twelve members. In populous towns there were district committees, and in counties, county committees composed by choosing one member from each baronial. Next above these were the provincial committees composed of two and sometimes three from each committee. The provincial committees elected five persons by ballot; the secretary examined the ballots and reported to the persons elected their appointment, but made no report to the provincials, who were thus ignorant of the persons composing the executive. The rest describes the method of communication downwards from step to step through these several ranks. Macnevin states this organisation to have been originally civil, but to have become military in Ulster about the end of 1796, and afterwards everywhere else; and then the real object before confined to the initiated, became openly professed throughout the body. This was of course to effect a revolution and establish a republic. The great design was to

guard from treachery. There could have been no dread of this had the real object been the ostensible one of reform. Such a confederacy weaving itself over the kingdom for six years could not fail to excite terror. The Government took a well-founded alarm; and all those who were opposed to or terrified by these proceedings, took steps which Mr Tone does not hesitate to characterise in the strongest terms. It was then, as always, the impudent claim of such men that their pretences were all to be taken and their stage whispers of revolution not be understood. Admissions like the following, however, are not to be misunderstood. Twelve members of the association subscribed £25 each in order to set on foot a paper, "The Northern Star," with the object of giving a fair statement of all that passed in France,—the principal doctrine to be inculcated as the result to erect Ireland into a republic. The loyal party, however, spread through Ireland, and in the focus of these plans was to remain in ostrich-like ignorance. The Government was to stand blindfolded. The commemoration of the taking of the Bastille gave rather an unequivocal sign of the tendency of the time. But the utter indiscretion of Mr Tone's party, and their total absence of political reserve frees us from the necessity of searching far for proofs. Mr Tone's book is an amusing mixture of attacks upon the authorities for their suspicions, with passages amply justifying them.

"August 1, 1792, busy folding papers for the Munster bishops. Damn all bishops! Gog not quite well on that point. Thinks them a good thing. Nonsense. Dined with Neilson and MacCracken, very pleasant. Rights of Man, French Revolution, no bishops, etc." The bishops here mentioned, we may observe, are those of the Roman church. Gog was their name for Mr Keogh, a Roman Catholic, and sincere in his religion, though evidently a democrat. He is mentioned by those who knew the times well, to have been the ablest and best of the set to which he belonged. On the 9th of August, Mr Tone finds reasons to relax in his antipathy to bishops, as his journal for that day runs,—“Dined with Dr Reilly the primate, Plunket, bishop of Meath, Reilly, bishop of Clogher, Cruise, bishop of Ardagh, to the number of eight bishops, all very pleasant sensible men. Dr Plunket, the first; I think he would be a credit to any situation; all well on the Catholic question. The matter as to the north now settled. More and more admire Dr Plunket. Glad to find the Catholic prelates men of such manners and understanding. *Beau jour*, all very civil to me and complimentary about Vindex, and refused to drink Lord Hillsborough, etc.” Several of his entries in this interval plainly indicate the perfect notoriety of the proceedings of Mr Tone and his party. A strong sense of alarm and indignation was of course excited in the loyal population of the north, and Mr Tone and his friends are met with insults and were menaced with dangers which he thus stigmatises: “Horrible things these religious discords, which are certainly fomented by the aristocrats of this country.” A few days after, a public meeting is held to receive from Mr Tone an account of the present state of the Catholics, and he enters in his diary,—“The Catholics offer to find soldiers if Belfast will provide officers.” The question is not here about the loyalty of the Roman Catholics; it is simply that it is made evident every means



was set in motion to corrupt them, and not without considerable success. Without casting reproach, there can be no doubt that this heaven working not secretly among the Roman Catholics, explains if it does not justify (as indeed nothing can) the violent explosion of Protestant terror, in which the followers of the other religion suffered so severe a persecution. It must be admitted that such proceedings were not merely calculated to awaken abhorrence, but considering the times, the state of Europe, and the universal fears of that day, that they gave ground for just alarm. If there was any degree of delusion, and if the indications Mr Tone and his party gave were a little overrated as to extent and consequence, there was no means by which the public could measure the force of an approaching storm. The leaders of the United Irishmen were no doubt the real originators of the sufferings of the Roman Catholic population. Mr Tone mentions a conference with the Marquis of Downshire and Lord Hillsborough, and seems to applaud his own part in it. Seeming to forget the previous revelations in which he takes the reader into his confidence, it is amusing to read his simple candour of falsehood and misrepresentation, which produced not the slightest effect on Lord Hillsborough. Indeed, the kind of reeling inconsistency in this diary is entirely unaccountable, except for the little memorandum that sometimes closes the entry, "generally drunk." Mr Tone's power of shaping his statement to his hearer imposed on many not likely to be deceived. Mr Grattan's connection with the leaders of this party was, on this account, liable to be mistaken. It is plain, however, that Tone was not deceived as to the objects of himself and his associates. The "generally drunk" revelations of the evenings counteracted the boasted discretion of his mornings, and the triumphs of low cunning over which he frequently chuckles. His communicativeness under these inspirations frequently reminds the reader of Stephano's "Open your other mouth, . . . cat, open your mouth." Of course it must be remembered that we are indebted for the diary to the curious inadvertence of his son; but yet, diaries are seldom written without a half conscious design of being confessions to the future.

It may be remarked, that among the underhand workings of the United Irishmen, one was directed to lead the Roman Catholics to put forward their claims in a manner most likely to lead to their rejection. With this view they were induced to assume a far more exacting and peremptory tone, at the very time when unjust suspicions of them filled the minds of men, and even influenced the acts of Government. The appeal to force was hinted; the amount of their demands augmented, and this policy, which was at variance with the real feelings of the Roman Catholic body, was in fact insidiously imparted for the purpose of drawing them into the confederacy. This was proved by the examinations of Emmett, Macnevin, etc., in 1798; but the plainest evidence was the disappointment shown when the Government suddenly yielded a larger measure of relief than had been hoped for by the most sanguine in April 1793. Mr Tone's comment is that every grievance had been remedied; every complaint redressed; but he proceeds, "the prayer of the petition was for general relief; the bill is not co-extensive with the prayer," and in various expressions he ill conceals his regret at the bill. It diminished the stock of discontent; and while

a formal consistency makes him speak with approval, yet the bile of dissatisfaction oozes unconsciously in every allusion. His language teems with admissions. In his eyes the consequence is a loss of public spirit. He looks on the gunpowder and militia acts and increase of the army as brought in under its cover, measures which were necessary to suppress a dangerous conspiracy. We must hasten, however, to the overt acts which soon removed all disguise. Mr Jackson, who was sent over from the French Government to sound the people of Ireland, was arrested on a charge of high treason. This arrest spread terror among the republicans. Tone was implicated by disclosures of a treacherous agent, employed by Jackson; for, as usual, he had been the least discreet, and had broadly offered to undertake a mission to France. Grattan, not aware that the other leaders were really as deep in the plot, advised them to cast him off; to their credit, this advice was not taken. Tone refused to conceal himself; it was impossible, however, that he should be allowed to brave the laws. The Government acted with a lenity which is explained by the fact that it was only the beginning of the struggle, and the animosity of party was not yet aroused; it was also accounted for by his having such powerful friends as the Honourable Marcus Beresford, the Honourable George Knox and Lord Kilwarden. An agreement was made between these gentlemen and the Government, that he should leave Ireland so soon as he could settle his private affairs. It was agreed that America should be his place of exile; and it was perhaps fortunate for him that this arrangement was entered into so soon, for on the trial of Jackson, who was convicted and executed for high treason, a paper was discovered which Tone had drawn up for the French Directory, which would undoubtedly have hanged him. On his arrival in America he immediately laid down as clear that he was free from any obligation to the Government which had granted him the life and liberty he had justly forfeited. His sense of honour and gratitude had been overrated strangely, for he was allowed to go without any pledge that he would not use his liberty for the purposes of treason. It was enough for him, as he stated to everyone, to have fulfilled his promise of going to America. When this was done he was clearly at liberty for the work of vengeance. This, and the old love of buccaniering, were still the motives which he concealed under the specious cover of patriotism and the Rights of Man. In the meantime, men like Arthur O'Connor, Neilson, Napper Tandy, Keogh, and the Emmetts, did not labour in vain to advance discontent, faction, and military organisation internally. Tone's work was henceforth to be from without. On his American adventures it is not necessary to dwell. Hamilton Rowan, who had escaped from prison, had got there before him. To this gentleman he applied for an introduction to Citizen Adet, the French ambassador at Philadelphia. He was well received, and at once communicated his plans respecting the possibility of an invasion of Ireland. During this negotiation he kept up a correspondence with his Irish accomplices, who liberally supplied him with money. He had also a small council of those members of the conspiracy who had been forced to fly from justice, and were now collected about him in the United States. Six months after his landing, he sailed for France, with such credentials



from Adet as were required to place him in communication with the authorities. Tone was enchanted with everything he saw there; the realisation of republican dreamings was too much for him. Tears ran down his cheeks as he saw Carnot present wreaths and standards to the soldiers, only to look at whom caused tears to gush into his eyes. He loved the French with all their faults, the guillotine at the head of them, a thousand times better than the English, no doubt recollecting that they had also their faults, including a gallows for traitors. The scene was indeed most congenial. A strange medley of levity and atrocity, of *bonhomie* and savage passions, flows most naturally through his pages. He presently finds his way to the levees of ministers and generals, who recognise in him a fitting tool for the ambition of young France. His self-importance and exultation here burst from him in the highest strains. "Nothing but ministers and *directoire executif*, and revolutionary memorials. Well, my friend Plunket (but I sincerely forgive him) and my friend Magee, whom I have not yet forgiven, would not speak to me in Ireland because I am a republican. Sink or swim, I stand on as high ground to-day as either of them. My venerable friend, old Captain Russel, had hopes of me in the worst of times. Huzza! I believe that wiser men, if they would speak the truth, would feel a little elevated in my situation." Among other most interesting traits of his elevation, in which we see glimpses of the naked heart, the reader will be amused by the following historical parallel:—"The devil puts it into my head sometimes that I am like Hannibal at the court of Prusias, supplicating his aid to enable Carthage to make war upon the Romans. There is a sort of analogy in the circumstances." One peculiarity of the negotiation in which he was now engaged, is the keen and sly regard with which he keeps sight of his own interests, and the active and earnest perseverance with which he pushes his suit. He obtained a commission of *Chef de Brigade*, and an advance of pay; and, after much delay, much dancing attendance on the republican functionaries, and a well described interview with Buonaparte himself, he had at last the satisfaction of seeing his patriotic wishes realised. The expedition to Bantry Bay followed, but by one of those interpositions of the winds which figure so importantly in English history, it was frustrated by a great storm within sight of its destination. At this point of his narrative, the journal of Mr Tone becomes very interesting; the particulars of the expedition are detailed with minute accuracy. The fleet is scattered; gales of wind and dense fogs succeed each other as if commissioned to protect the coast. The Frenchmen, discouraged by these incidents, exhibit a doubt as to the prudence of persevering which irritates the intensely wrought-up anxiety of Tone, who, with a considerable armament, had come within reach of vengeance. We are now able to see that the deliverance of his country was second to this feeling in his mind. He urged on the French commander that, although their undertaking was now hopeless, something should be done to save the honour of the republic. "I proposed to him to give me the *Legion des Francs*, a company of the *Artillerie Legere*, and as many officers as desired to become volunteers in the expedition, with what arms and stores remained, which are now reduced, by our separation, to four field-pieces, 20,000 fire-locks at

most, 1000 pounds of powder, and 3,000,000 of cartridges, and to land us in Sligo bay, and let us make the best of our way." In the event of failure he urges to the commander that "he knew what *kind of desperadoes it was composed of, and for what purpose*; consequently in the worst event, the republic would be well rid of them; finally, I added, that though I asked the command, it was on the supposition that none of the generals would risk their reputation on such a desperate enterprise." It is here quite plain that Tone projected simply placing himself at the head of a band of desperadoes, to burn, plunder, and murder. One amusing piece of naiveté occurs during this anxious moment, he expresses surprise at the *sang froid* with which he sees his country's coasts, on which he desired to land with his desperadoes, and speculates if he loves her the less for not having romantic feelings. But amidst the gloom of disappointment, there appeared a transient gleam of renewed hope to Tone and his companions. On the next day his ardour seems to have spread, and nothing but a speedy landing was thought of. He becomes quite delirious with triumph and delight, and has in the meantime worked himself into a dream of success. "Huzza! I apprehend we are this night 6000 of the most careless fellows in Europe; for everybody is in the most extravagant spirits on the eve of an enterprise, which considering our means, would make many people serious." His ardour is crossed, however, by painful images of the gallows. The thoughts of his family can be more easily dismissed than these inauspicious imaginings; "for my family I have, *by a desperate effort*, surmounted my natural feelings so far that I do not think of them at this moment." As to the expedition itself, after being "six days in Bantry Bay, within five hundred yards of the shore," and having their fleet scattered and reduced from forty-three to fourteen sail, it was settled to return to Brest, if they could escape the English. Tone having lost his hopes of fame and revenge, consoles himself that it is still possible to be happy in a humble way, and conjures up dreams of domestic felicity. It is nearly ludicrous under these circumstances how rapidly his changeable nature becomes invested with the cast-off feelings of parental and conjugal tenderness, and he straightway falls into new horrors about his separation from his wife and "darling babies." On the last day of the year 1796, he was once more on the way to Brest; where, after a highly tempestuous passage, during which he experienced some very alarming and disagreeable casualties, he arrived on the 1st of January, 1797. Shortly after his arrival, Mr Tone was transferred with the rank of adjutant-general, to the army of the Sambre and Meuse, under his friend General Clarke (Duc de Feltre). This interval was not of long duration, and is marked by no event. In the month of March we find him journalising in Paris, leading "the life of a dog." Not being quite a Frenchman, he felt deserted and alone, a condition from which his social temper revolted. He met Tom Paine, and of course fell down to worship before his wisdom, but had the sagacity to see that his idol was "vain beyond belief," and "he drinks like a fish." At this time it is observable from his journal that his spirits begin to fail him, habitual drunkenness being probably the cause; for, as he observes, when drawing a complacent parallel again, speaking of Paine's propensity, it "is a misfortune I have



known to befall other celebrated patriots." He began to find that "it is not good for man to be alone," and had a prospect of being soon reunited to his family whom he had left in America. They arrived safely in Paris, after surpassing considerable difficulties.

In 1798 accounts reached Tone of the arrest of several of his old friends and associates, but we must now pass to the last events of his life. The death of Hoche was considered to have put an end to the hope of an invasion of Ireland on a grand scale; for he alone possessed influence, together with strong zeal, to carry his views into effect. Napoleon, however, looked for good results from a diversion in the direction of Ireland, and in consequence the expedition was entrusted to inferior men. The want of funds delayed it; but news having arrived of a move in Ireland, it was determined that something should be done. Tone states that the most farcical ignorance was shown by those engaged in the preparations. He was, as usual, alert, urgent, and sagacious, and seems to have been successful in his exertions to set the managers right.

The plan at length decided on was to send small detachments to land in different places, and so spread and keep alive the rebellion. In pursuance of this scheme, a small expedition, consisting of a thousand men, first sailed from Rochelle, under General Humbert. Towards the end of August a landing was effected in Killala Bay, and the town stormed. Satisfied with this first fruit of French valour in Ireland, Humbert loitered enjoying the hospitality of the English bishop and drilling the peasantry. The report of General Lake's approach, however, roused him, and he advanced to meet the small force hastily detached to oppose him. They met at Castlebar, and Lake's detachment was defeated. Humbert's expedition, which had been precipitated by his own impatience, without awaiting the consent of the Directory, while it perplexed his government, hastened their movements, and the news of his success reaching them, gave added impulse to their preparations. But meanwhile the momentary success had been followed by the surrender of Humbert's small force at Ballinamuck, where it was surrounded by Lord Cornwallis's army. Matthew Tone and Teeling were taken and executed. The mass of the United Irishmen then in Paris followed in a small vessel, with Napper Tandy at their head. They landed on the north-west coast of Ireland, and finding the real state of affairs, they made their escape after sending out a few proclamations. The third party was commanded by General Hardy, with three thousand men. In this flotilla there were but four Irishmen, of whom one was Mr Tone. He was in the admiral's ship, the *Hoche*. Tone had little hope of success in this expedition, consisting of one 74 and eight frigates, which started so late as the 20th of September from the bay of Camaret. He resolved, if taken, never to suffer the indignity of a public execution. Suicide he considered, in such an event, to be no more than choosing the mode of his death. Admiral Bompard, to avoid the British fleet, and strike from a quarter whence a French force would be least expected, took a long sweep to the north-east in order to bear down on the northern coast. After being scattered by contrary winds, the expedition, reduced to the *Hoche* and three frigates, reached Lough Swilly after a course of

twenty days. On the 11th of October, at daybreak, the admiral saw an English fleet of six ships of the line and two frigates bearing down upon him. Nothing was to be expected from resistance, nor was there a chance of escape from the estuary in which they were enclosed. The tide had ebbcd, and at low water the great seventy-four gun vessel was like a whale in shallows; Bompard signalled to his frigates to attempt to escape, and a boat having come from the schooner for orders, he urged Tone to save himself. He refused; the case was one which admitted of no result but death or capture—death in either case to him; but his answer was, “Shall it be said that I fled while the French were fighting the battles of my country?” The Hoche was presently attacked by the Robust and Magnanime, and shortly after by the Amelia, while the other frigates tried to escape and were pursued; three remained with the admiral’s ship, and took part in the battle. At half-past ten, after a gallant resistance, when masts, sails, rigging, and hull were shattered, and five feet of water in her hold, the Hoche struck; the three frigates that were with her were also captured; and of those that had separated, only one frigate and a schooner escaped with the intelligence of the destruction of the expedition.

Tone took an active part in the fight. He had charge of a battery, and exposed himself fearlessly to the British fire. He was not recognised among the other prisoners when taken, having completely acquired the appearance, language, and manner of a Frenchman. There had been, however, a suspicion that he was in the expedition, and as a matter of course, there was immediate inquiry. It so happened that the French officers were invited to breakfast with the Earl of Cavan, who was commander of the district. A gentleman of the party, Sir George Hill, who recognised Tone, informed Lord Cavan of the real character of his guest. Of course there was but one course; he was arrested, and sent to Dublin for trial. He was tried by court-martial, and his conduct before his judges was that of a brave and self-approving man. His talents, the continued trials through which he had passed, his high courage, his pride, the emergency of his situation,—all gave a sense of elevation to his mind, and dignity to his bearing. A belief in his own patriotism was strong, and he felt heroic in the prospect of death. The court-martial met on the 10th of November 1798. The trial was shortened by a full and free admission of “all the facts alleged.” Mr Tone offered no defence; nor did he, as he might, since he bore no commission in the British army, impugn the jurisdiction of the court. He only asked to be allowed to read a paper in vindication of his motives and conduct. As this paper, however, instead of being an extenuation of his career, was found to be only a boast of it, he was stopped by the court on the humane ground that he was injuring instead of serving his cause. Mr Tone expressed his consciousness that his case was beyond pardon; but although the court was sensibly affected by the courage and calm resignation of the prisoner’s manner and address, it was impossible to allow him to proceed. After a short silence, he asked if there was not usually a short interval between the sentence and execution. This question was not answered, as the report had, in the first instance, to be sent to the Lord-Lieutenant. When asked if he had anything more to say, he expressed



his desire to die as a soldier, and added, "I request that indulgence rather in consideration of the uniform which I bear—the uniform of a *chef-de-brigade* in the French army—than from any personal regard to myself." To attest this claim he gave in his commission. Two days after he was sentenced to be hanged in forty-eight hours. The justice of this sentence was nowhere complained of; but Mr Tone not being in the service of the crown, and Dublin not under military law, it was obvious that a court-martial had no jurisdiction. Yet the policy of the Government in preferring it to a civil tribunal was perfectly understood. While still the sparkling embers of a bloody rebellion, which Mr Tone and his associates had kindled, lay scattered through town and country, it was not considered prudent to make the King's Bench a rostrum for addresses calculated to blow them into renewed flame. There were still plenty of United Irishmen unchanged and untransported to raise another sanguinary rebellion; and it was considered necessary for the public safety, for the protection of which alone laws exist, to invade even the sanctuary of the law itself. Mr Tone's friends knew very well that a trial in the civil courts could only have the same result, but it was hoped to gain time for the French Government to interfere. With this view Mr Curran made a humane effort to interpose the authority of the Court of King's Bench. Having failed in raising a subscription to form a bar, he determined to proceed alone. On the day appointed for the execution he moved for a writ of *Habeas Corpus*. Such a motion could not be refused; and the Chief Justice, Lord Kilwarden, on the suggestion that the prisoner might die while the writ was preparing, ordered the sheriff to go to the barracks and see that the execution did not take place. The sheriff returned with the refusal of the provost-marshal to delay, and Mr Tone's father, who had been sent to serve the writ, also came back with General Craig's refusal to obey it. Lord Kilwarden then ordered the sheriff to take the body of Tone into custody, together with the provost-marshal and Major Sandys. But there was another actor on whose movements they had not calculated, and this was Mr Tone himself. On the night before, he had executed his pre-determined purpose of suicide, by cutting his throat with a penknife. This was the account next brought into court by the sheriff. The wound had been closed by a surgeon, who pronounced that four days must elapse before the result could be pronounced upon. It was on the morning of the 19th that decided symptoms of approaching death appeared. The surgeon whispered, that if he attempted to move or speak he must expire instantly. Mr Tone took the inadvertent hint. He made a slight movement, and spoke—"I can yet find words to thank you, Sir; it is the most welcome news you could give me. What should I wish to live for?" and with these words he expired.

JOHN FITZGIBBON, EARL OF CLARE.

BORN A.D. 1749.—DIED A.D. 1802.

THE father of the subject of our memoir was a barrister of considerable eminence, who is mentioned as having realised an income (enor-

mous in those days) of £6000 a-year. John Fitzgibbon was born in 1749. He was early destined for the bar, and received a suitable education. At an early age he entered Dublin University. There he was a contemporary of Grattan and many other well-known men. His rival in college was Mr Grattan. Grattan had the advantage in the beginning; as, however, the course became more extensive by the usual addition of more difficult books, Mr Fitzgibbon took the lead. Without the keen and electric vivacity which distinguished his great competitor, he was probably endowed with a severer reason. He was soon called to the bar; and while his father's influence may have operated in his favour, he exerted a degree of energy, industry, and commanding talent, that required no stepping-stone to success. In 1779 he was retained as counsel against the return of Mr Richard Hely Hutchinson as member for the university; and the election of this gentleman having been declared null, he was himself elected by the university. This was the commencement of his political life. He from the first became a strenuous supporter of the Government. Heir to a large income, and with abilities that might well be their own passport, we need not suppose that he took his side from corrupt motives such as generally formed the ties between the Castle and its supporters. We have had occasion in previous memoirs to speak harshly of Fitzgibbon's public career, but when we come to consider the man himself, it cannot be denied that, apart from the acts and sayings of his public life, he was a man of unblemished honesty, and really acting from conviction. It was the nature of such a man to be on the side of order and authority. He was made to rule, as some men are made to oppose rule. Fitzgibbon and Tone were at opposite moral poles.

In 1784, on the recommendation of Grattan, who knew his firmness and integrity, and felt the necessity of having a firm man of that stamp to oppose Flood, and the tide of turbulence directed by him, he was appointed Attorney-General. For this office he was professionally qualified and politically recommended. He certainly carried out to the full the intent of the selection by the firmest opposition to the popular leaders, Mr Grattan himself included, when the time came. It was the theory held by Mr Fitzgibbon, that in Ireland there were two nations, of which the more civilized was for some time longer to be protected from the uncivilized; that such a state of things, anomalous as it was, and accompanied by gross anomalies, demanded a strong executive; that popular requisition might become insatiable, and that where it happens to be the mere echo of the agitator's demand, it has seldom any intent but that of raising and maintaining a struggle against power. When the people cry for bread, the cry is sincere; but when they ask for parliamentary reform, it is not certain that they know what they mean; indeed, it is certain in Ireland, and in Mr Fitzgibbon's time, that they did not. The party most clamorous cared nothing in reality for reform; they wanted revolution. This was a step on the road—a cover under which to advance.

Mr Fitzgibbon being thus placed in a leading position in the House of Commons, soon became as eminent for his eloquence, firmness, and resolution, as he was at the bar for legal ability. An instance of his courage and energy was his conduct with regard to an illegal meeting sum-



moned by the sheriffs. Mr Fitzgibbon, then one of the most unpopular men in the kingdom, accompanied by only one or two friends, attended the meeting and forced his way through the mob, who had latterly been in the habit of offering personal insults to those whom they suspected of being averse to their measures; and getting upon the hustings, he interrupted a popular orator in the midst of his harangue. He then told the sheriffs that they had acted illegally in convening the meeting, commanded them to leave the chair, and threatened them with an information *ex officio* if they presumed to continue it. He then left the astonished and staring assembly amidst the hisses of the mob; and the sheriffs, overawed, instantly dissolved the meeting.

Mr Fitzgibbon appreciated at their proper value the hisses of a Dublin rabble, and displayed the strong masculine energy of character which the time and position he was placed in undoubtedly required. In the summer of 1789 Mr Fitzgibbon was promoted to the station of Lord Chancellor, and was the first native Irishman who had held this dignity. It was a difficult post at such a moment, and we are fully prepared to admit that, with all the over-severity and tyranny of the new chancellor, and with his inexcusable use of corruption afterwards, he was a most efficient instrument either to arouse or to quench a rebellion. He was at the same time raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Fitzgibbon of Lower Conelly. In his legal capacity he was remarkable for the promptitude of his decisions, a quality which may suggest crudeness of conclusion; but the only certain test—viz., appeals—shows that his judgments were not liable to this reproach. With respect to his action in repressing the rising sedition of the time, we may quote the testimony of one admirably qualified to speak,—we mean Mr Tone. He admits that his conduct of the Irish administration was judicious and able; he stigmatises Lord Clare as the adversary to republicanism, but he allows that nothing less than the means which he employed could have prevented it. The phrase used by Lord Castle-reagh in the examination of Dr M'Nevin is open to much question. There is no doubt that the Government did lay a train of revolution in order that what was certain to come some day might do so when they were fully prepared, and it could do little damage; but Dr M'Nevin admits that the organisation of the United Irishmen preceded the measures taken to make it explode; and this is as much justification as the policy admits of. To rouse a people to rebellion for any end—to do this great evil for whatever good in the result, is a course which admits of no apology.

In 1795 Fitzgibbon had been created Earl of Clare; and in 1799 his merit in safely guiding the ship of state through the stormy time of the rebellion was rewarded by a peerage of the United Kingdom, to which he was raised by the title of Lord Fitzgibbon of Sudbury. The story of the suppression of the rebellion is part of the biography of Lord Clare, as the biography of the rebel leaders is a history of the rebellion's rise and progress. We shall therefore briefly show how the Lord Chancellor, who was in fact the executive of Ireland, partly by good fortune, partly by great firmness and thoroughness, overcame such a rebellion as cannot well occur in Ireland again.

Telegraphs, railways, and the increased superiority of military over

mobs, now make effectual insurrection of an unmilitary people impossible, and the external dangers of England in that day which chiefly menaced her through Ireland, though they might and no doubt will menace her again, could scarcely present themselves in the same form. It was providential that about the time that the insurrection was ripe for an outbreak, two seizures were made which completely disclosed their plans,—one was made in Belfast in 1797; the papers then found showed the numbers of the enrolled to have been 72,206, and they also prepared Lord Clare for the destination of the French being Bantry. The other seizure was at the house of Oliver Bond, and in the papers there found was a complete account of the projected attacks and operations of the rebels in Dublin, Wicklow, and Kildare. After a partial rising in the county of Down, which was easily quelled, it was towards the end of May that the insurrection broke out over the whole country. A number of small and detached encounters occurred in the counties of Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare, and Meath. In nearly all of these the rebels suffered severely, and were dispersed by the small bodies of yeomanry and militia, which it was the wise policy of the Government, considering the sort of foes they had to contend with, to leave scattered over the whole country for the protection of the loyal inhabitants. In the battle of Tara, as it has been called, many thousands of rebels were encamped on that historic site to which they had collected the plunder of the whole country round. On being attacked by a small body of yeomanry and fencibles, under Mr Preston, afterwards for that action created Lord Tara, after the manner of all barbarian forces, they charged down the hill with the roar and weight of a billow charging upon the shore; and like it, too, they retreated from each attack leaving a drift of dead behind them. In this, as in other engagements, the rebels submitted to the most heavy losses before giving up the day; while, on the other hand, the losses of the military and loyal forces were seldom more than nominal. It is difficult to believe the accounts handed down to us of pitched battles in which the rebel dead were counted by hundreds, and the loss on the other side was sometimes represented as *nil*; it may have been considered expedient to hide the real casualties. In Wexford, the most important engagements took place, and the rebellion was far better commanded and more determined there than in other places. The most memorable scenes were the assaults on Enniscorthy and New Ross, the taking of Wexford and the battle of Vinegar Hill. At Enniscorthy a small body of 300 yeomanry and volunteers defended the town successfully against many thousand rebels from without and the treachery of other enemies within, who set the town on fire in their midst. The attack was most determined and recklessly brave; the rebels pressed on over heaps of dead which grew into barricades, and their fallen many times exceeded the number of the defenders of the town. At last, the loyal forces, after losing one-third of their number and repulsing the assaults of the rebel army, were obliged to retreat upon Wexford. That town was soon after occupied by the rebels, and the most frightful atrocities practised on the loyal inhabitants. Those of them who had taken refuge in the shipping, were compelled to land, and the greater part of the Protestant inhabitants, after a mock trial, were put to death



with horrible tortures on the bridge. There is scarcely any parallel in history for the atrocities at Wexford but the massacre of Cawnpore. It is historically just to say, however, that it was in spite of the efforts of the principal leaders, and only when they had left the town to strengthen the camp at Vinegar Hill. It must also be said that almost every man in the rebel army had a burning memory of acts of torture perpetrated on his relatives and friends; and that this was not a spontaneous burst of devilry, but the terrible vengeance of a rude peasantry. We do not of course accuse Lord Clare of having countenanced the extermination which the yeomanry and their leaders seemed to have in view. On the contrary, though he was willing to screen and indemnify magisterial and military criminals, he was undoubtedly a man of personal humanity. This was illustrated in the case of Lord Edward Fitzgerald and the escape of Hamilton Rowan.

An attack was made by the rebels in great force on New Ross: after gaining some advantage, and keeping up the battle with considerable bravery for ten hours, they were defeated by General Johnson's forces; the loss on the insurgent side was 2500 left dead on the field; the military had nearly 200 in killed and wounded, including Colonel Lord Mountjoy, who was among the slain. It was in their rage at this defeat that a number of hostages were burned in a barn at a place called Scullabogue. Bagenal Harvey, the rebel general, a man of high family and position in the county of Wexford, resigned his command in consequence of this atrocity. Shortly after, Vinegar Hill, the principal stronghold of the insurgents, was attacked by the king's forces under General Lake; there was a great slaughter of the former and considerable loss on the side of the military; but the main body of the rebels managed to escape, owing to the investment of their position being left incomplete by General Needham's coming up too late; this was shortly followed by the surrender of the rebels at Wexford. On the day before Wexford was retaken by Sir John Moore, and the battle of Vinegar Hill won by Lake, Lord Cornwallis arrived in Dublin as viceroy. A difference had arisen between Lord Camden and Sir Ralph Abercromby, the commander of the forces, who objected to the ferocity with which the rebellion was being crushed. In consequence of this, the general resigned, and it was considered advisable that a great military viceroy should be appointed, who should act as dictator at this crisis when divided counsels might prove fatal. Lord Cornwallis, finding that although the insurrection still lingered, it was no longer a struggle of hope but one of despair, wisely and humanely considered that the proclamation of a general amnesty was the best way of ending it; but this idea was intolerable to those who, having been engaged in the contest, were naturally exasperated, and desired not only the restoration of peace, but vengeance and stern example. The new viceroy found the whole of the official body and Government supporters against his wishes, and was obliged to suppress his proclamation. To Lord Clare's honour, he was almost the only one who concurred in the Lord-lieutenant's proposal. The rebellion was stamped out with great severity, and its suppression was followed by trials and executions which can scarcely be justified except on the ground of the most undoubted necessity, and that could not have existed when rebellion was crushed.

On the whole, however, a more humane order of things commenced; the people began to return to their homes; bands of desperate men, headed by ringleaders of the insurrection who had no hope of mercy, still made their way from county to county, or took refuge in the mountains of Wicklow, but the general population was thoroughly cowed. Lord Clare's threat that he would make the people "as tame as domestic cats" was carried out for the time. His Lordship was a political surgeon, desperately fond of the knife, and there never was a man who could deal more thoroughly with a rebellion. Perhaps the fact of his family having been of the Roman Catholic religion, from which his father emerged for the purpose of being called to the bar, gave him a more hearty detestation of "Popery" than is usual amongst educated men; and except in a born Irishman, the same disregard of the life of mere Irish peasantry would scarcely have been possible. The first Irish Chancellor justified his birth in this respect. Lord Cornwallis, accustomed to the bloodshed of war, felt the horrors of Irish Government and acts for which it made him in some degree responsible to his conscience, and to the utmost of his power endeavoured to check them; but when the bloodthirsty party became dominant, and compelled his resignation, he was glad to escape from the injustice and cruelty perpetrated with his knowledge. Lord Clare, on the other hand, felt perfectly satisfied, and considered himself, and in reality was, a most humane, merciful, and upright man. There can be no doubt that the calling out of the yeomanry, which was done by Lord Clare's advice, was a measure sure to lead to terrible consequences. A rebellion ought to be put down by the military, and in a country possessing a standing army, should be distinguishable from civil war. Lord Clare converted it into civil war by arming the loyal population against the disloyal, the Protestant against the Roman Catholic. When neighbours take up arms against each other, atrocities are sure to be committed on both sides, which embitter and extend the struggle; what as a rebellion might have been put down with ease and without permanently dividing the country, as a civil war grows into a desperate and general struggle, and the restoration of peace, for generations, means only a truce. This is actually the case in Ireland to the present day, and it dates from Lord Clare's calling out the yeomanry in '98 to overthrow the rebellion. In the county of Wexford, where the rebels made the great and most nearly successful struggle, we shall show in future memoirs that the rebellion owed its dimensions to the atrocities of the yeomen. A troop of these warriors sometimes made an expedition which would do credit to the most savage tribe of North American Indians; their war trail was marked by mutilated corpses and burning villages. As they rode past cottages they called the people to their doors and shot them; of course, the people of that part of the country immediately rose *en masse*, in some instances headed by their Roman Catholic pastors, armed with whatever weapons their rage could find, and joined the rebellion. Reading the history of the rebellion of 1798 in the light of the Fenian insurrection, we at once see the connection between the difference of treatment and the difference of result.

Before leaving the subject of the rebellion we must notice Lord Clare's conduct with regard to several of the rebel leaders, upon whom,



as being gentlemen, and in the same sphere as himself, he displayed the humanity of which he was really possessed. His inhumanity arose from having no sympathy with the peasantry, not in fact feeling their humanity, looking upon them as Englishmen abroad have generally looked upon Blacks and Hindoos; but to those whom he could regard as his fellow-men, he showed himself a different being. It was said that Henry Sheares had crossed Lord Clare in love with a Miss Swete, to whom he was deeply attached, and who was won by the young United Irishman. John and Henry Sheares were barristers, and had highly distinguished themselves in the University of Dublin, having become prominent leaders of the disaffected party and writers in the "Press" newspaper; they fell under the public censure of Lord Clare, who was most unmeasured in his language on such occasions; and the consequence was, that letters passed which must have greatly incensed the angry temper of the Chancellor. Notwithstanding this, at the Limerick assizes, just before the outbreak of 1798, Lord Clare sent for the brothers with the object of dissuading them from taking part in it. The interview was private, and what passed was unknown, but this was no doubt the humane and gentle object of the Lord Chancellor in desiring the meeting. His persuasions were unfortunately unsuccessful, the young men came out flushed and angry, and perhaps Lord Clare was too haughty and petulant to be a good mentor. In the case of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, to which allusion has already been made, he made the same endeavour to separate him from the rebellion. He was informed of every step taken by the United Irishmen, and warned Lord Edward's friends of his danger, advising them to persuade him to leave the country for a while. Unfortunately, he was not more successful than with the brothers Sheares. When the unfortunate young nobleman lay dying, and his relatives, by the decision of the council, were refused admission to him, Lord Clare was the one to yield to Lady Louisa Connolly's entreaties, and he accompanied her to the prison at night, waiting for three hours in an antechamber while the aunt and nephew were together for the last time. Lord Clare's kindness to Hamilton Rowan's family was very great, and there is some reason for thinking that his escape was favoured. It was probably his influence that obtained leave for Tone and others to leave the country; and with respect to the ring-leaders and their followers, he exactly reversed the policy that modern statesmen have followed—pitiless to the many, merciful to the few. In consequence of the disaffection that prevailed in the University, a visitation was held by the Lord Chancellor, with Dr Duigenan for his assessor. The students were called up separately to take an oath that they would discover all matters as to which they were questioned. On the first day about fifty were contumacious and were marked for expulsion. Two of the fellows also fell into trouble; Dr Browne, a senior fellow, for disclosing to the students assembled outside that he had voted against the expulsion of two of their number, for which indiscretion Lord Clare was inclined to expel him; the other was Dr Stokes, a name honourably distinguished in Dublin and its University. He had been mixed up with the United Irishmen in the commencement, but showed that he had taken a loyal part when they left their first design. On the second day of the visitation the Lord Chancellor

threw off some of the sternness of the judge and assumed a more parental tone to the students, desiring them, as in confession, (his lordship did not draw the analogy) not to consider themselves bound to accuse others by name, but only to witness against themselves. Many of those who at first refused did then take the oath, and the existence of four committees of United Irishmen within the walls of the University was acknowledged. The secretaries were Robert Emmett, McLaughlan, Flynn, and Corbett junior. The result of the visitation was that nineteen students were expelled, and Dr Stokes, for his former connection with the conspiracy, was suspended for three years. In these proceedings the tyrannical character of Lord Clare was displayed, along with a certain consideration and humanity for offenders of his own class. His acts of tyranny, which were often very gratuitous, and committed more from the necessity of his nature than for any purpose, made him many bitter enemies, and procured him more abuse than perhaps any man before or since has sustained; for Ireland is the most abusive of countries, and Lord Clare was the most abused of Irishmen. On one occasion the mob broke into his residence in Ely Place, and his life was only saved by the courage of a lady of his family, who, mingling with the crowd, led them to believe that he was in another place. During Lord Edward Fitzgerald's imprisonment, when he was summoned to the council in haste, an abusive mob outside poured showers of curses and bad language upon him. The Lord Chancellor rushed to the door in a fury, and gave back curses and abuse in a way that amazed the crowd; and going with Lord Westmeath into a shop, came out armed with pistols, and forced his way defiantly through the crowd of people to the Council Chamber.

The time had now come for the Union to be broached, and Pitt's Government found in Lord Clare a hearty supporter. He had risen too high to be bought; he was perhaps one of the very few Irishmen who honestly supported the measure. His contempt for the people of Ireland made him really wish to complete her subjugation to England in the most thorough and lasting manner; it had been done already by armed force, but that might have to be done repeatedly; a moral subjugation, a loss of individuality and educated public opinion, and a reduction in this respect to the provincial level, he saw was absolutely required in the interests of English Government. To remove all the talent, and rank, and influence of the kingdom, all that gave Ireland a voice, to England, and leave only the dead level of a crushed people behind, that remained to be done, and that he was heartily willing to do. "The greatest enemy that Ireland ever had" was what Barrington called him; and without implying that he was not a good and conscientious man, this description was just. On February 7, 1800, Lord Clare delivered the message in favour of legislative union. His speech made a voluminous pamphlet. It dwelt on all that was darkest in Irish history, abused the Roman Catholics, and represented the union as a panacea. His speech, which was very able, and the energetic use of all the influence he possessed; and such strong tyrannical men always will possess considerable influence with the human average,—earned him the most cordial thanks of the Government. Lord Cornwallis moderated his fiery temper and used his intense energy



and purpose. Determined strength of will was Lord Clare's most valuable gift. After the union was carried, the Chancellor turned his attention to law reform. The office of Master of the Rolls was made a *bona fide* one, it having been previously a sinecure, and Sir M. Smith was appointed Master. This enabled Lord Clare to absent himself and take his seat in the English House of Lords. There he did not appear to much advantage; the temperature was so different, so much colder, calmer, fairer, and less passionate than anything that this Irish dictator had ever experienced. He took every opportunity of denouncing the Roman Catholics like a bigot, and this pleased neither the House nor the ministry. "The strange corruptions of the Romish church, and the impure practices under it, the tyrannous authority and domination of the See of Rome, and the gross imposition it laid on the minds of men," was some of his convincing and temperate language. Not only in parliament, but with the Government of Ireland, he showed his hatred of the Roman Catholics. He wished to change the constitution of Maynooth, and to revive some of the penal laws. This was very displeasing to the Government, who had used the Roman Catholics to carry the Union, and whether thoroughly sincere or not in the promises by which that indispensable help had been procured, did not wish it to appear that they were guilty of such violent hostility towards the party they had just seduced. Such a feeling is natural, but not the less disgusting, for being usually entertained by seducers. Lord Hardwicke, Lord-lieutenant at the time, thus wrote:—"Whether Lord Clare has taken the part he has from spleen or dislike to the Government, or from a conviction that it was right to do so, I cannot pretend to determine; but so far I must observe that his bringing the Maynooth case to public notice, at this time, and in this particular manner, is very inconsistent with the concurrence he expressed in our first conversation with the general opinion of the inexpediency of agitating at the present moment any points connected with the Catholic question. It would be very curious if, after all, Lord Clare should be attempting to acquire popularity with the Catholics at the expense of the Government. He seems to me, with a good deal of cleverness and vivacity, to be very deficient in consistency and precision in his ideas."\* The Lord-lieutenant proceeds to show that the Chancellor's proposal to mix lay with clerical education at Maynooth would defeat its object by withdrawing the Roman laity from Dublin University, and would greatly tend, also, to make their education monastic. This letter shows curiously the distrust which, with all his thoroughness, Lord Clare inspired in some of his friends. "That little man would sell his country to-morrow," said Ponsonby, long before, when Fitzgibbon, after declaiming against the project of the union, and declaring that he at all events would never be induced by any consideration to support it, had left the room. And yet that he supported it conscientiously, and that it was his natural role to act as a supporter of it, we do not doubt. His political nature had not developed at the time; much that moulded it had not happened; and he was speaking on the keynote of his company.

\* Confidential Letter to Addington.—Cornwallis Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 365.

Lord Clare died in January 1802, after a short illness, at the age of fifty-four. He had done all the mischief, if mischief it was, that he could have done had he lived to a hundred. It would not, as we have shown, be true to say that he manufactured a rebellion in order to have an opportunity of striking his country down, for, as he argued not unjustly in parliament, the government he belonged to had done everything that lay in its power to assume the character of, and conduct itself as, a Government of conciliation. It had by a Roman Catholic Relief Act endeavoured to conciliate that portion of the people which, by the recall of Fitzwilliam, had been thrown into an attitude unexampled for a hundred years, but it is equally true that when conclusions failed and rebellion was inevitable, it was Lord Clare's policy that made the outbreak so serious as it became; and it is impossible to doubt that it was his deliberate intention to prevent insurrection from being the mere playing at soldiers that it became in the days of the Fenians, to show the people of Ireland once for all that it is a very terrible affair, and to make it sufficiently bloody to be a long warning. For this purpose he did not check the acts of the yeomen, ancient Britons, and German mercenaries, and there is no doubt that wherever a collision occurred, the wish of the Government was that the rebels should be severely punished. In acting as the great champion of the Union, and assisting both in the creation and delivery of the bill, he destroyed all that was good in Irish nationality, and left it to become the pitiful thing it is at the present day. Such was his public career; all that was good and amiable in the man was kept for the privacy of home. His religion was sincere; a biographer\* states on the authority of the American writer Hawthorne, that when he received the sacrament it was at an obscure country church to which he went alone to escape notice; but it was of the ultra Protestant, that is, of the ancient Jewish or Mahommedan type, a religion of exclusion and a religion of violence and hatred. It was meant for, but it was not, Christianity. He was equally firm in his friendships and his enmities, he was capable of acts of great kindness, and he was at the same time precise and profuse in his expenditure. The testimony of Archbishop Magee in the sermon preached at his funeral is worth quoting:—"As to his private life, it is well known that the same steadiness which sustained his public conduct governed his personal attachment. His friendships were sincere and fixed; and although in a character marked by such strength of features, the lineaments of the softer virtues could scarcely be expected to mix; yet they who knew him in the unbendings of his retirement, have often witnessed the genuine indication of their existence, and can fully attest the spontaneous and animated emotions of a latent tenderness, which it seemed as much his study carefully to conceal, as in this age of affected sensibility it is that of others to display. In this, indeed, as in other parts of his conduct, it is to be lamented that an habitual disgust against all hypocritical appearances had so far wrought upon his mind as to render him generally anxious to suppress, lest he might be supposed to affect, feelings and qualities the most honourable and endearing. The occasions, however, have not been few in which, even to the public eye, the milder

\* *Lives of the Lord Chancellors of Ireland*, vol. iii. p. 280.



virtues of his nature broke through this restraint, and if the charities of domestic life be received as evidence of the kindly disposition of the heart, perhaps in no case can such proofs be adduced more abundant and convincing. In all matters of pecuniary concern, his dealings were directed by a strict and punctual regard to his engagements; and at the same time distinguished by a liberality which, without indulging in those excesses which beget embarrassment and sacrifice independence, manifestly evinced a mind aloof from the sordid love of accumulation. In him, indeed, honesty and liberality can scarcely be said to have claimed the rank of virtues. They required no effort and could boast no triumph, when a rooted contempt of wealth precluded all means of their counteraction. And it deserves to be remarked, that amongst the numerous calumnies which a vindictive malice has endeavoured to cast upon the fame of this distinguished person, the tongue of slander has never whispered the imputation of a single act of mercenary meanness." But while those words of eulogy were being spoken from the pulpit by the Archbishop of Dublin, they were strangely accompanied by the hootings of the Dublin mob outside St Peter's church. Curses loud and deep, yelling and shrieking, almost drowned the eloquence of the prelate. Numbers made their way into the church itself and created disturbance, being with difficulty restrained from heaping mud and filth upon the coffin. From the face of its occupant, had he been alive, they would have fled; it was an ignoble and cowardly revenge after all. One man flung a dead cat on the coffin, in allusion to Lord Clare's threat that "he would make the people like tame cats."

Such was the public funeral that the citizens of Dublin gave the Earl of Clare, their detested and terrible chancellor. The title is now extinct, the last of the line, Viscount Fitzgibbon, having fallen in the famous charge of the light brigade at Balaklava.

#### JOHN PHILPOT 'URRAN.

BORN A.D. 1750—DIED A.D. 1817.

JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN was born in the summer of 1750, his father being seneschal of the Manor Court at Newmarket, in the county of Cork. His mother, from whom he derived his second name and all his talents, was a woman of considerable culture and attainment. Even as a child, Curran's ability was so striking, that the clergyman of the parish, the Rev. Nathaniel Boyse, undertook his preliminary education, it seems, gratuitously. His rapid progress justified the good opinion and care of friends, and induced his parents to determine on sending him to the university. His first destination was the church. After a while he was removed to the free school of Middleton, where he was received for £10 a-year; and in 1769 he entered the university of Dublin as a sizar. His obtaining a sizarship was a proof that his time had not been thrown away at school, and his afterwards gaining a scholarship in classics, and commencing to read for a fellowship, showed that it was well employed in the greater freedom of the university,

where many a studious and clever boy becomes an idle young man. Withal, however, that he did not neglect his studies, he was seldom missing in the youthful freak, for which, until the last generation, the students of "Oid Trinity" were renowned. He was, it may be inferred, often in great perplexity for the want of money, but he bore all with steady courage and unshaken good humour. He is said to have been much given to metaphysical inquiries and discussions, and to have often conversed on the nature of death, eternity, and the immortality of the soul—topics which offer themselves first to the curiosity of youth before the mind has learned the narrowness of its range, and the vastitude and obscurity of such subjects. In his second year an incident happened to him which showed the resources of his wit and reason, so as to call forth the applause of his fellow-students, and awaken his ambition. In consequence, it was said, of this, he determined to go to the bar instead of entering the church. He had obtained the reputation of wit, with its usual accompaniment of wildness and extravagance. His college compositions in prose and verse have considerable sparkle and more finish of composition than might be expected in a juvenile essayist. Having completed his college course, Mr Curran proceeded to serve his terms in the Middle Temple in 1773. From London his letters give a tolerable account of his feelings and occupations. We cannot omit an incident, trifling in itself, but significant as being the beginning of his oratorical career. He was in the habit of frequenting a debating society, in which, though he felt the native impulse, he could not muster the nerve for a trial of his own powers of speech; he was in some measure discouraged by a "precipitation and confusion of utterance" (perhaps the result of the eagerness that is apt to outrun the tongue), which had obtained for him among his school-fellows the *sobriquet* of "Stuttering Jack Curran." So great was this defect, that he was advised to devote himself to the silent duties of a chamber counsel. Curran must, of course, have felt the consciousness which never fails to accompany a power so strenuous and kindling as that of the orator; and aware of where his difficulty lay, he determined to overcome it. His first attempt was, as may well be supposed, a failure. He stood up filled with nervous anxiety, and thinking more of the eyes and ears of which he was the centre than of the subject of debate; and in this state the mind refused its office; he got no further than "Mr Chairman;" his friends cried "Hear, hear;" but, as he afterwards told the story, "there was nothing to hear." After this unlucky beginning, some time passed before he could summon up courage to venture on a second trial. An opportunity at last arrived. It was under the agreeable influence of a remittance from Newmarket, and having had an additional glass of punch in honour of it, he repaired with his friend Apjohn to the "Devils," where there was already an orator on his legs, "just such a person," according to Mr Curran's own account, "as Harry Flood would have called 'the highly-gifted gentleman with the dirty cravat and greasy pantaloons!'" I found this learned person in the act of calumniating chronology by the most preposterous anachronisms, &c. He descanted on Demosthenes the glory of the Roman forum; spoke of Tully as the famous contemporary and rival of Cicero; and in the short space of half an hour transported the straits of Mara-



then three several times to the plains of Thermopylæ. Thinking I had a right to know something of these matters, I looked at him with surprise; and whether it was the money in my pocket, or my classical chivalry, or, most probably, the supplemental tumbler of punch that gave my face a smirk of saucy confidence, when our eyes met there was something like a wager of battle in mine; upon which the erudite gentleman instantly changed his invective against antiquity into an invective against me, and concluded with a few words of friendly counsel to 'Orator Mum,' who, he doubted not, possessed wonderful talents for eloquence, although he would recommend him to show it off in future by some more popular method than his silence." Mr Curran followed the seasonable advice, for which he repaid his adviser, "the dirty cravated orator, in such a sort, that it was agreed by most persons present that they never 'saw him so well dressed.'" So decided was his success, that the chairman despatched his secretary to invite the "eloquent stranger" to sup with him. After this seemingly trivial, but perhaps really important incident, Curran became a constant speaker at debating clubs, where he acquired the fluency, and, what is more important, the confidence which in public speaking is more than half the battle. Both from his zeal in the cause of the Roman Catholics, as well as from his dress, he was generally supposed to be a young priest of that church, and was called in the club which he most usually frequented, "the little Jesuit from St Omer's." It appears from various sources that very high anticipations were already formed by his friends of his future success. His intellect was a light that could not be hid; in the most brilliant company it could not be outshone, and under the most depressing influences it found some chink by which to discover itself. We also learn that he was endeared among the circle of his friends and relations by his affectionate and unassuming deportment. Naturally joyous and social, there were times when he had fits of despondency. His circumstances accounted for this. The threadbare black clothes were the sign, not of Jesuitism, but of poverty: and even men of genius suffer from such causes as personal privations, and the prejudice created against them by poverty-stricken dress. The latter is supposed to designate bad morals, as well as a bad position in the world. In those, however, who know the truth, there is nothing that excites such a painful sympathy as the poverty of genius; and there was one at least of Curran's friends—Mr Hudson, a well-known dentist, afterwards his neighbour, and always his friend—who was most generously desirous of assisting him.

Of his studies we are told—and there is ample proof of it preserved—that his reading was patient and extensive. Through all his speeches we perceive an acquaintance with the best English writers, which was a very important source of his eloquence. Though apparently of spare and attenuated frame, he was patient of fatigue, and required little rest; and his constitution enabled him to pursue his studies with interest and constancy, while apparently devoted to convivial habits. Among those writers from whom he is supposed to have derived his earliest notions of style, were "Junius" and Lord Bolingbroke. The speech of Antony in Julius Cæsar was also a favourite study, and his recitation of it showed great skill and natural power of elocution. Of the classics,

Virgil was his favourite, and, next to him, Homer. A peculiar source of his ideas was his familiar acquaintance with the language and manners of the Irish peasantry. The deeply-imaginative tinge of Irish nature infused through the Irish language, and embodied in the very ignorance of this antique race, could not fail to be most apparent on a mind like Curran's, which, without being very deep, was most brilliantly reflective. "He used," his son records, "to say of himself that he derived his first notions of poetry and eloquence from the compositions of the hired women over the dead." His political sympathies were kindled at the same source—the feelings of the peasantry. Curran was called to the bar in 1775. His character went before him, and he rapidly obtained employment. As a proof of this it is mentioned that the first year produced eighty-two guineas, the second between one and two hundred, and so on in a regularly increasing proportion. This was far less than such men as the Earl of Clare started with, but for a man without connection, and with nothing to advance him but what he carried in his brains, it was for those days a very good progress indeed in beginning. The same nervousness which impeded his first effort in the debating society, returned in his *debut* at the bar, and, we should presume, in a manner more marked than usual. He had but to read a short sentence from his instructions, but he did it so precipitately and inaudibly, that the Chancellor, Lord Lifford, requested of him to repeat the words and raise his voice. The brief dropped from his hands, and a friend who sat near him was obliged to take it up and read the necessary passage. This nervous timidity disappeared when he had to repel an attack, as in the case I have mentioned when assailed in the debating society as "Orator Mum." In a case upon which he was employed shortly after his call, he remarked, on some statement of Judge Robinson's, that he had never met the law as laid down by his lordship in any book in his library. "That may be, Sir," said the judge; "but I suspect that your library is very small." Mr Curran replied, "I find it more instructive, my Lord, to study good works than to compose bad ones; my books may be few, but the title-pages give me the writer's names; my shelf is not disgraced by any such rank absurdities that their very authors are ashamed to own them." "Sir," said the judge, "you are forgetting the respect which you owe to the dignity of the judicial character." "Dignity!" said Curran, "my lord, upon that point I shall cite you a case from a book of some authority, with which you are, perhaps, not unacquainted." He then briefly recited the story of Strap in "Roderick Random," who, having stripped off his coat to fight, entrusted it to a bystander; when the battle was over, and he was well beaten, he turned to resume it, but the man had carried it off. Mr Curran thus applied the tale:—"So, my lord, when the person entrusted with the dignity of the judgment-seat lays it aside for a moment to enter into a disgraceful personal contest, it is in vain when he has been worsted in the encounter that he seeks to resume it; it is in vain that he tries to shelter himself behind an authority that he has abandoned." "If you say another word, Sir, I'll commit you," replied the angry judge; to which Mr Curran retorted, "If your lordship should do so, we should both have the consolation of reflecting that I am not the worst thing your lordship has committed." This is a sample of Mr



Curran's promptness and the bold spirit which in those rude and disorderly times was a strong recommendation at the Irish bar. Some years, nevertheless, elapsed before his real powers found an opportunity for their display. This occasion offered itself at the Cork assizes, in an action brought by a priest of the Roman Church against Lord Doneraile. We need not enter into the particulars; but Mr Curran acted with a spirit and humanity which won him the enthusiastic attachment of the lower orders, who thenceforth looked upon him as their champion. In the performance of his duty on this occasion, he had to cross-examine Mr St Leger, brother to the defender; and as it was his object to depreciate his evidence, he had described him in very gross and insulting language in his speech. In doing so, however, he had not mentioned his name. "When Mr St Leger came upon the table and took the Testament in his hand, the plaintiff's counsel, in a tone of affected respect, addressed him, saying, 'Oh, Mr St Leger, the jury will, I am sure, believe you without the ceremony of swearing you, your character will justify us from insisting on your oath.' The witness, deceived by this mild and complimentary language, replied with mingled surprise and irritation, 'I am happy, Sir, to see you have changed the opinion you entertained of me when you were describing me a while ago.' 'What, Sir? Then you confess it was a description of yourself! Gentlemen, act as you please; but I leave it to you to say, whether a thousand oaths can bind the conscience of the man I have just described.'" A duel followed in which Mr Curran evinced very great intrepidity; he was called upon to fire by his antagonist, to which he said jestingly, "No, Sir, I am here by your invitation, you must open the ball." And then, observing Mr St Leger's pistol to be directed wide of him, with singular promptness, he cried out "fire," Mr St Leger fired, and missed. This was a well known manœuvre of duelling. Mr Curran declined to return the fire, and so the affair terminated. This incident contributed materially to increase his practice, and originated his popularity among the lower orders of the Irish—a feeling which amounted to veneration. His genius and habits were so intensely national, that the people, overlooking accidental differences, justly looked upon him as one of themselves, and considered his successes as popular triumphs. This estimation of him was unchanged to the end.

The Order of St Patrick was founded by Lord Avonmore (Barry Yelverton), Curran's closest friend. It contained those who were most eminent for wit and popularity, and indeed nearly all the first public men of the time in Ireland. Among these, Curran was a principal member. One of the best of his poetical effusions was the charter song of the Order. Of his pathetic allusion after a lapse of many years to the recollections of this union, we have already taken notice in Lord Avonmore's memoir. Mr Curran had been seven years at the bar when he was returned as member for the borough of Kilbeggin by the interest of Mr Longfield, afterwards Lord Longueville. Having disagreed with his nominator's political opinions he shortly after insisted on purchasing a seat to be filled on Mr Longfield's nomination. It was about the same period that he obtained his silk gown. In 1785 Mr Curran had a quarrel with Mr Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare.

The debate in which it occurred, arose on a measure introduced by the latter, who was at the time Attorney General. While Mr Curran was speaking, Mr Fitzgibbon slept, or more likely pretended to sleep; on which Mr Curran let fall some strong personalities which were retorted with equal violence; Mr Curran replied, and the consequence was a hostile meeting. This, which ended harmlessly, did not remove the enmity which they retained towards each other through life. At this time Mr Curran had attained a full and lucrative practice at the bar. His life passed in a round of duties and occupations which demand no comment and offer little of detail. The point of view in which he always appears to most advantage, and in what we might call the most genuine character, is in such of his letters as have been published. These we regret are beyond our compass. A visit which he paid to France in 1787 affords some pleasing specimens. He was a nice and discriminating observer of all that was characteristic, and with his happy humour and power of language, never failed to transport the reader to the scene he was describing. He possessed a peculiar turn for practical wit, which occasionally gave rise to adventures that could not have been carried through by anyone but himself. Of this, many curious instances may yet be remembered, which we cannot venture to relate on the mere authority of oral tradition. An amusing story, but far inferior to some we have heard, is told by his son among the details of his visit to France. Having received from his friend Arthur O'Leary, an introduction to the superior of a convent near some town he was to pass, Mr Curran was received in the most cordial and complimentary manner, with a Latin oration, and an offer of the keys. The Latin was so very bad that he, without any hesitation, responded in the same language; he said, "that nothing could be more gratifying to him than to reside a few days among them, that he should feel himself perfectly at home in their society, for that he was by no means a stranger to the habits of monastic life, being himself no less than the prior of an order in his own country, the Order of St Patrick or the monks of the Screw. Their fame might never have reached the Abbot's ears, but he would undertake to assert for them, that though the brethren of other orders might be more celebrated for learning how to die, the monks of the Screw were as yet unequalled for knowing how to live. As, however, humility was their great tenet and uniform practice, he would give an example of it on the present occasion, and instead of accepting all the keys which the Abbot had so liberally offered, would merely take charge, while he stayed, of the key of the wine cellar." A droll adventure is also related on the occasion of his sitting at the opera, between an Irish lady whom he had accompanied thither, and a young Frenchwoman. The ladies having manifested a mutual disposition to converse, but being respectively unacquainted with each other's language, Mr Curran volunteered his service as an interpreter. He, however, so altered and adorned the conversation as it passed, with witty and complimentary additions, that the ladies each began to entertain a very flattering impression of the other. At length Mr Curran, when he thought admiration had gained its height, in conveying some very innocent question from his country-woman, converted it into an anxious demand if she might be favoured with a kiss; "Mais oui, mon



Dieu ! oui," cried the lively French girl, " l'allois le proposer moi-meme," and springing across Mr Curran, imprinted an emphatic salutation, according to the custom of the country, upon each cheek of his fair companion, and then turning to him, added, " O vraiment, Monsieur, Madame votre amie est une veritable ange." In 1788, Mr Curran made an excursion to Holland, of which as usual his letters contain interesting and graphic sketches. In the following year he took an active part in the Regency question. It is mentioned that on this occasion he was offered to be raised to the bench, and eventually to the peerage, on condition of giving his support to the administration. These offers he had the public virtue to decline. His opposition was rather marked by a fresh degree of spirit and unsparing animosity, and he wielded the weapons of ridicule and exposure with so much address, and pressed home his charge so successfully, that it is evident he became very obnoxious to the Irish administration. Some time after, upon a discussion in the house upon the subject of a division of the Board of Stamps and Accempts, he was replied to by Sir Boyle Roche, who concluded with language plainly conveying a menace of personal consequences. Mr Curran made a spirited reply, which he concluded by saying, " As to myself, while I live, I shall despise the peril; I feel in my own spirit the safety of my honour, and in my own and the spirit of the people do I feel strength enough to hold that administration, which can give a sanction to menaces like these, responsible for their consequences to the nation and to the individual." In a few days after, he was insulted by some person who was, or was supposed to be, in the service of the Castle. This was the notorious Newell, who turned informer against the rebels, and afterwards, in consequence of his forward insolence, receiving from his employers rebuffs and mortifications, revenged himself by endeavouring to inculcate honourable men. He ended his career by falling into the hands of his ex-friends the rebels, by whom he is believed to have been assassinated. At this time he was in the employ of the Government. Curran applied to Major Hobart to dismiss him; the major replied that he had no such power, and that Newell was as much a stranger to him as to Curran himself. A correspondence followed which terminated in a duel from which neither party received any hurt. We have already noticed the quarrel between Curran and Fitzgibbon; there grew up between them a bitter hostility, and the whole conduct of both to each other was very deserving of censure. To Curran the main consequence was that he lost his practice in the Court of Chancery, which he rated at a thousand a year. His powers of advocacy, however, were so admirably fitted for the practice of the law courts, that he could scarcely fail to have his utmost powers of effort engaged; but this does not of course meet the question of emolument. From 1794, Curran took a very active part in the numerous important questions brought forward in parliament. In these he took the popular side, and acted and spoke with the fearless honesty of his character. He stood by the side of Mr Grattan, and yielded to none in zeal or popularity. It would nevertheless be unjust to Curran to rank him as a politician. If so classified, he would take his place among many good and eminent men, whose names are now almost lost in oblivion. It is as a rhetorician and an advocate that we are to put forward the claim of one who in these

respects has perhaps never been excelled, and not often equalled in modern times. To the accusation against his oratory that it passed certain fixed bounds, and did not always obey the canons of conventional taste, that it was sometimes too poetic and too exuberant, we can only say that in respect of his deviations he was most effective. He had the true characteristic of genius (for genius always receives this censure from mediocrity) that he did not want a beaten road to attain his end, but struck out new roads where there had been none. His defence of Hamilton Rowan addressed to any jury in any time or country would be admitted to be a splendid piece of advocacy. He exalts the subject and occasion with every solemn and affecting consideration which can impress the conscience or the feeling of the jury in favour of his client; and his manner and style are equal to the matter. The power of allusion was the master quality of Curran's mind; on light occasions it furnished the best part of his wit, while it played a most important part on serious ones. His most powerful passages display a mastery of the best models, and the most effective passages of ancient and modern literature. Scripture he had evidently studied as a favourite classic, and often drew from it his happiest touches of allusion and graceful language. He had not the massive quality of the higher class of lawyers, but he possessed what was far greater,—the genius of an actor, a dramatist, a moralist, above all, of a poet. If his poetic power had not wasted itself in perishable speech, which is after all a prodigal use of genius, spending the portion of goods in this life, Curran might undoubtedly have been a greater Moore in poetry, a lesser Swift in prose. His poetic powers,—not turned into the artificial jets and architectural fountains into which the classical taste of the time had debased poetry—flowed free as a mountain stream, and had the reckless pathos and force of his native land. We should gladly, if space allowed, offer one or two specimens of his poetic power; but we must pass on.

Mr Curran conducted the defence of the conspirators and rebels of 1798, and his renown rests in no small degree upon his efforts in their behalf. So far as eloquence could avail with prejudiced juries against undoubted facts, Curran's eloquence did avail. It moved the hearts of all; it wrung tears from severe judges; it covered with infamy the informers; it raised the only plea that could be raised, that such evidence was so base that no man's life should be taken upon it.

The defence of Hamilton Rowan has been named by Lord Brougham as the greatest speech of an advocate in ancient or modern times. The commencement of it was compared to Cicero's speech in defence of Milo. A more remarkable and closer resemblance occurs in the celebrated passage on "Universal Emancipation," a doctrine which the crown lawyers had declared to be treasonable—to a well-known passage in Cowper's 'Task'—

"We have no slaves at home. Then why abroad?  
And they themselves, once ferried on the way  
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.  
Slaves cannot breathe in England: if their lungs  
Receive our air, that moment they are free;  
They touch our country and their shackles fall."

The passage in Curran's speech was as follows:—"I speak in the



spirit of the British law, which makes liberty commensurate with and inseparable from the British soil; which proclaims even to the stranger and the sojourner, the moment he sets his foot on British earth, that the ground on which he treads is holy and consecrated by the genius of universal emancipation. No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced—no matter what complexion, incompatible with freedom, an African or an Indian sun may have burnt upon him—no matter in what disastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down,—no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of slavery, the first moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain, the altar and the God sink together in the dust; his soul walks abroad in its own majesty; his body swells beyond the measure of its chains that burst from around him, and he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation."

By referring to the originals the curious reader will find much more that is similar, and may easily observe the several mouldings which the same thoughts have received from two minds belonging to such different classes. Curran drew out of the treasures of a richly stored and retentive memory things old and new; and Scripture he had evidently studied as a favourite classic. The masterly allusion in the same speech to the golden image and the spirit walking through the furnace is a good instance of the use of his acquaintance with the Bible.

The next State trial in which Mr Curran's efforts are recorded, is that of William Jackson. He was a clergyman of the Church of England, who, although by birth an Irishman, had spent most of his life in London, where he "occupied the pulpit" of Tavistock chapel, and had won the reputation of being an eloquent and popular preacher. He resided for several years in the family of the Duchess of Kingston, and the actor Foote, having introduced the Duchess's character into one of his plays, Jackson, with his pen, acted as her knight-errant. Having visited France and adopted republican principles, he unfortunately became mixed up with the United Irishmen and lent himself to the designs of the enemy. It is strange to find a man who for several years had held the position of a Protestant preacher in London, and had been in such good society there, remaining unassimilated to British thought and feeling, and showed a character of more than common force and individuality. He was sent over to Ireland to ascertain the practicability of an invasion; and met in London an old friend, a solicitor, whom he engaged to some extent in his designs and correspondence. This person, whose name was Cockayne, grew frightened at the danger of the enterprise in which he had become engaged, and determined, by giving up his friend to certain destruction, to deliver himself from this risk. He accordingly opened his mind to Mr Pitt, who availed himself of so good an opportunity, and desired him to accompany Jackson to Ireland, as a spy both upon him and the course of the conspiracy in general. In obedience to the minister he obtained all the information he could; and at last Jackson was arrested on his evidence, and tried for high treason. The great caution of the United Irishmen prevented his arrest from compromising the leaders; but so great was the interest taken in his fate, that four inferior members of the body associated to save him, by the assassination of Cockayne.

This came out in the course of another trial. Jackson remained in prison for a year, during which time he was treated with lenity and permitted to see his friends. A circumstance which occurred to him while in prison, shows that however mistaken in his political views he was a man of the most honourable character, of an almost antique type. One of his friends had remained with him to a late hour, and he went to see him to the outer door. The jailer was asleep and beside him lay the keys. Not wishing to disturb him, Jackson took the keys and let out his friend. While thus engaged the natural thought of escape flashed upon him; he wavered for a moment, but the next brought up to his mind the consequences to the jailer, who had on all occasions treated him with kindness; the generous feeling prevailed; he quietly laid down the keys, and, without awakening the friendly jailer, returned to his own apartment.\* His trial came on at last before Lord Clonmel. Curran acted as his counsel. If the treacherous friend on whose sole evidence the Government relied was not impervious to shame, it would have been better for him to have fallen a victim to the United Irishmen, than to have come under the flail of Curran's tongue. One of the great advocate's most earnest efforts in parliament,—almost the only one in which he had been principal—was to make two witnesses necessary for a capital conviction. This law, had he procured it, would have saved several of his subsequent clients, whom he defended in its spirit against the evidence of a single perjurer by profession. In truth, however, it must be admitted that, notwithstanding the infamy of Cockayne, there could be little doubt that his evidence was true in the main, and no intelligent jury could have failed to be convinced of Jackson's guilt, or to find, as the jury actually did, a verdict against him. Whether it was the intention of Government to carry out the capital sentence cannot be determined; but precautions were taken against suicide which were ridiculed by the prisoner. He observed that "the man who feared not death, could not want the means of dying, and that as long as his head was within reach of the prison wall he could prevent his body from being suspended to scare the community." When on his way to the court to receive sentence he was observed to be very sick. In the court he appeared in great disorder, which for a time was ascribed to fear. This continued to increase rapidly; he obeyed the directions of the court with unnatural and spasmodic efforts, which seemed to indicate an imperfect consciousness; the perspiration streamed down his face and rose in clouds of steam from his hair; a general impression of astonishment and horror spread through the court; "he beckoned his counsel to approach him, and making an effort to squeeze him with damp and nerveless hand, uttered in a whisper, and with a smile of the most awful triumph, the dying words of Pierre—'we have deceived the senate.'" Struck by these terrible indications Lord Clonmel was about to remand him, when the attorney-general entered court and called for judgment. He was accordingly set forward, and presented, while endeavouring to obey the orders of the court, a horrible spectacle of the struggle between the powers of life and death. Ghastly and convulsed, with half closed eyes, in which there was already the dim

\* Dr M'Neven.



glare of death, he stood for a time, while Curran interposed some arguments, on which a discussion arose, in arrest of judgment. At last he sank down and died. The dead man remained in the dock while the judge and spectators departed. The next day an inquest showed that he had died by poison.

Still more remarkable than the trial of Jackson was that of the unfortunate Henry and John Sheares, whose fate is still recollected with interest. This trial afforded one of the most memorable displays of Curran's eloquence, and of the peculiar energy which he threw into the cause of his clients. We have already alluded to these young men in the memoir of Lord Clare, whose successful rival in love one of them was said to have been, and whom he endeavoured to save from their fate with a severity of private rebuke and exhortation which perhaps defeated, as it marred, the real kindness and generosity of the design. They were both members of the Irish bar, and of a respectable family connected with the county of Kilkenny. Henry, the elder brother, possessed a competent fortune, had received a University education, had no talents, but was much valued and loved in the relations of private life. His character was weak, credulous, and yielding; but at the same time he was proud, ambitious, talkative, and ostentatious. His brother John was a man of firmer intellectual mould; a simpler and sterner character, with far less vivacity, but with more tendency to enthusiasm. These brothers were remarkable for their close attachment to each other, and, as usually happens, John possessed a strong ascendancy over the conduct and opinions of his feeble brother. In 1792 they spent a little time in Paris, where they took the infection of republicanism, and unfortunately, when they came home, fell into contact with the United Irishmen. They joined them at first on the reform question, which, if not then, certainly became later, a bait for the trap of those endeavouring to catch converts to revolution. Authority to which we cannot deny great weight, is satisfied from the evidence of Emmet, O'Connor,\* and M'Neven, that until after 1795 the professions of the Society were

\* Arthur O'Connor (born 1763) outlived for more than half a century the dangers and excitement of his early life, and died in 1852. Originally ordained a clergyman of the Church of England, he forsook that profession and was called to the bar, and became one of the leaders of the United Irishmen. In taking that side he sacrificed brilliant prospects, having been offered a commissionership of Revenue, with a promise of the chancellorship of the Exchequer. He edited the *Press* newspaper, one of the chief organs of sedition; but was prevented by his arrest from taking a part in the bloodshed of the rebellion, and great influence was exerted on his behalf by many leading political men. As nephew and heir of Lord Longueville he had been received in the best Whig society; and Fox, Grattan, Sheridan, the Earls of Moira and Suffolk, and others, appeared to give evidence for him at Maidstone. Father Coigly, who was arrested at the same time, was condemned and executed. O'Connor was acquitted, but rearrested in court after an undignified disturbance. With the two other United Irishmen mentioned above, he composed, by agreement with the government, in order to save the lives of Byrne (who was executed notwithstanding) and Bond, who died in prison, a memoir of the Society of United Irishmen. He was included in the bill of banishment; but until the peace of Amiens, was imprisoned in Fort George in Inverness-shire. He afterwards went to France, where he entered the army, and married the daughter of Condorcet. He retired from the French service as a colonel, but by living sufficiently long, rose to the rank of general.

sincere;\* but a different view has been upheld in these memoirs, although we fully admit that, even at a later date, in the conference held at Belfast, there was a disposition to take what they had been seeking nominally, and without hope of obtaining, and to resign what in reality they had been covertly following.† We could not account for the parliamentary leaders of the patriotic party holding aloof as they did from the United Irishmen, if up to 1795 the real designs of the Society had been as perfectly innocent and legitimate as their own. Mr Grattan and his friends, although they only knew it superficially, were perfectly aware that they could not, as loyal men, connect themselves with the Society. What was known, however, to the leaders with their extensive information, was not known to such men as the brothers Sheares when they first joined; but they were of course initiated into the deeper myteries in a short time. They fell under suspicion; but an unfortunate lenity was shown to them by the authorities, which, instead of being taken advantage of to withdraw from the conspiracy, was only used as a license to advance. When matters had reached the verge of insurrection, they were led on into taking an active part. Considerable disaffection was supposed to prevail amongst the military and militia, and one of the objects of the conspirators was to work upon this. A certain Captain Armstrong, whose regiment, quartered at Loughlinstown, was known to be especially tainted, was in the habit of expressing loose opinions, probably from idle braggadocio, and not from any real opinion. It is not worth while to expend trouble, in examining whether Captain Armstrong was a fool or a villain; we incline to believe that he was the former. However this may be determined, his conversation led a bookseller, named Byrne, who was evidently a sort of procurer for the rebellion, to request that he might be allowed to introduce him to the Sheareses, who, he said, were deeply engaged in the common cause, and would regard him as a valuable acquisition. Captain Armstrong was probably ashamed or afraid to confess that he had been talking nonsense, and did not see how to avoid being introduced into the conspiracy. He consented to the introduction, but at the same time was determined not to be a real conspirator. He accordingly gave information to his superior officer, and was ordered to lend himself to the arts of seduction which were evidently about to be practised upon him. Byrne introduced him to the brothers; he dined, by Lord Castlereagh's recommendation, at their house in Baggot Street, where they shewed him the most friendly hospitality, little suspecting that they were entertaining their hangman. The authorities duly briefed the conversation of each entertainment, and when sufficient materials had been collected, the young men were arrested and brought to trial. It was past midnight when Curran rose to address the jury in defence of Henry Sheares; he was exhausted by the exertions of a day spent in protracted endeavours, in cross-examination and otherwise, to discredit the testimony

\* "The Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland," by W. E. H. Lecky, M.A. Mr Lecky with the purest and calmest style, combines the fairest statement; but he rather errs on the side of acquitting everybody, which is the weakness of modern history.

† See memoir of Grattan, p. 257.



of the witness. He availed himself of the circumstances related with great felicity, and delivered one of the most affecting speeches perhaps ever heard in a court of justice, omitting nothing which might influence the feelings, conscience or reason of the jury. As, however, the evidence, albeit the credibility of Armstrong was shaken, was too strongly supported to admit of a reasonable doubt, Curran's eloquence was in vain to save his unfortunate clients. They were found guilty and sentenced to execution. On the announcement of the verdict, the brothers embraced each other. When brought up for judgment they each addressed the court. Henry Sheares having a large family, attempted to utter a request that he might have time allowed for the arrangement of his affairs; at the mention of his family his feelings overpowered him, and he was unable to proceed. His brother John addressed the court at some length; after vindicating himself from the charge of having instigated the rebels to sanguinary conduct, he implored with strong and pathetic earnestness that some respite should be allowed to Henry, to provide for his unhappy wife and six children, and their aged mother. Lord Carleton was much affected by the request, the more so as he had been acquainted with the Sheares' family, but he was unable to accede to it. The next day was fixed for the execution; and perhaps the rapidity with which capital sentences were carried out in those days, was more merciful than the long interval now granted, in which, although there is more time for religious preparation, there is a dreadful realising of the punishment, and long drawn torments of fear. John Sheares prepared to meet his end with the natural firmness of his character; a letter written the night before execution, while it shows the deepest affection for his family, displays calm and unshaken courage. The death of Henry Sheares was not met with the same fortitude. He was probably not physically a coward, but his position was peculiar; the affectionate solicitude of his friends, the interest in his fate, the address of his advocate, the sympathy of the judge, raised false hopes; and, in the short interval, he could not let go his hold of life and turn composedly to his dreadful fate. Fear is the certain consequence of turning the back upon danger; and having determined to make a struggle for life, as it grew hopeless, he fell into an agony of terror. His letter to Sir Jonah Barrington shows the awful convulsion of spirit which, for the same reason that the features are concealed in the last struggle on the scaffold, one would wish had not been preserved. Barrington hastened with the letter to Lord Clare, who was deeply affected by it, and advised that Henry Sheares should give some information which would authorise the Lord-lieutenant to grant him a reprieve. Had the letter been received a few hours sooner, Sir Jonah would have been successful; but he was not aware of the rapidity with which the officials were at the very same moment making vain his efforts.

Mr Curran defended all the state prisoners; but we have only entered into the cases of the Sheareses and Jackson here, to save the necessity of giving them separate niches in our memoirs. To conduct the defence with the thoroughness and freedom which he displayed, required great superiority of mind to danger and intimidation. He was threatened by Lord Carleton with the loss of his silk gown; and on

one occasion, defending a prisoner, he was interrupted by the clash of arms proceeding from the angry soldiery, whose bayonets shone about him in the lamplight of the court. But this man had power by the spells of his tongue to hold a hostile audience in rapt attention, long after darkness had descended on the court; and in the badly lighted chamber the wonderful face which was generally very much upturned and set a little to one side, with a peculiar look of inspiration, well caught in his bust in St Patrick's Cathedral, alone seemed to remain illuminated, and enchained all eyes to itself.

During the peace of 1802, Curran paid a short visit to Paris, when a new chapter of political philosophy was opened to his intelligent mind, and, we believe, studied with profit. His speech in behalf of Kirwan, who was engaged in the rebellion of 1803, is elevated not only by a sounder but stronger and more philosophic tone of principle than his defences of the rebels of 1798. He took hold of the occasion to throw out many sound, forcible, and impressive appeals to his deluded countrymen, which prompt a wish in reading them, that there were now among us some voice of equal power to warn and remonstrate with our delusions. Of the rebellion of 1803 we shall take separate notice, and will not therefore dwell on it here, further than to advert to the domestic trouble in which it involved Mr Curran. This arose from the visits to his house of Robert Emmet, between whom and Miss Curran there existed the deepest attachment. Some degree of suspicion was necessarily cast by this circumstance on one so popular in his opinions as Curran, and occasioned some painful and troublesome inquiry in which he was, however, treated with respect and delicacy by the persons concerned in the investigation.

On Mr Pitt's death, Curran's party came into power. He was appointed master of the rolls and a member of the privy council. He was dissatisfied with a station so little in conformity with his habits of legal practice, which had been entirely or at least chiefly confined to the law courts. The consequence was that there arose a coolness which lasted for some time, between him and his friend George Ponsonby. Little remains to be told. The rest of his life was passed in the duties of his situation, and the social intercourse for which he was endowed with so many qualifications. From the hour of his promotion, however, his spirits began to decline. To relieve the monotony of his time he formed some literary projects. One of these was a memoir of himself and of his time. It is to be regretted that his health and leisure did not permit him to fulfil his design. The speeches of the advocate cannot afford a criterion how far he would have been a just and temperate historian, but we have no doubt the work would have been full of valuable observation and have thrown much light on the time. The change of habits which gave this literary inclination had, as we have said, a most depressing effect on his spirits. The dry business of equity did not exercise his peculiar powers. It was morally a termination of his public life. The effect is very traceable in his letters and the recollections of those who knew him. He was at all times a man of morbid tendencies; they were repressed in society and in the conduct of public business, and naturally shun the eye of day. But in retirement, when a man's individual sense is brought into action, they assert



their supremacy. There was in Curran a tendency to suspect insult, and a fierce preparation to resent it, which evidenced this latent disposition. He spent his vacations in travelling for health or amusement. In his visits to England, he was treated with all the respect and distinction to which his talents and celebrity entitled him and we find him mixing in the highest whig circles. In 1814, the increasing infirmity of his health induced him to resign his judicial appointment, and from that period he passed most of his time in England. Only in a few of his letters can we trace him through the brief remainder of his days. These letters have a peculiar interest in the distinctness with which they show the working of a mind to which the world had become vapid and colourless, and of which the springs appear to have become thoroughly broken down and the spirits evaporated. Still we have evidence that under the influence of the social affections and the power of convivial excitement, the "Cervantic spirit which used to set the table in a roar," would be lighted up for a moment, and the wonted charm was found upon his tongue. But from the more retired and sobered loneliness of his pen, the power and exhilaration had departed,—he was perceptibly overpowered by the monotony of the prison wall of his existence, and of a life cheered by no animating principle. His heart was sick; he reflected and remarked, but his mind was not with his words; he made efforts, and was strenuous without energy or power. He meditated on mortality in the catacombs, and on all the sad and busy vanities which he met; but in all, he rather seemed to be rousing up his mind to think than to be in earnest in anything, except now and then an affecting allusion to himself. He was accompanied by an impression which did not deceive him, that he was near the end of life. A few years of very melancholy wandering from place to place in search of health which he did not hope to find, and of social intercourse which he but imperfectly enjoyed, conducted him to the gate towards which all are travellers. He was first seized with slight attacks of paralysis, which did not apparently affect the vital parts, and passed off without causing serious alarm. It was on the 7th of October 1817, a swelling appeared over one of his eyes, which he merely attributed to cold; on the 8th he was seized by apoplexy, from which he continued insensible, or nearly insensible, to his death on the 14th. "Three of his children," writes his son, "his son-in-law and daughter-in-law, and his old and attached friend Mr Godwin, surrounded his deathbed and performed the last offices of piety and respect." He was buried on the 4th of November in one of the vaults of Paddington church. Among other mourners at his funeral were Thomas Moore and George Croly.

ARCHIBALD HAMILTON ROWAN.

BORN A.D. 1751.—DIED A.D. 1834.

THE subject of our memoir was the son of Gawn Hamilton of Killyleagh Castle, and of the only daughter of William Rowan, whose name he adopted in compliance with his grandfather's will. He was

educated in England; having been for some time at Westminster public school, he entered the University of Cambridge. While a student he paid a visit to Holland. He obtained a commission in the Huntingdon militia from the Duke of Manchester. About the same time he was induced by a London solicitor to raise money by selling annuities at six years' purchase, and launched out into a course of extravagance. Soon after he became acquainted with Lord C. Montague, who being compelled to return to his government of South Carolina, invited him to accompany him as far as Falmouth, and then prevailed upon him to take a trip with him to America in the character of private secretary. At Charleston he witnessed some of the disorders which were the precursors of the American war. After three months he took his passage back to England and returned to Cambridge. Finding himself heavily involved by the extreme mismanagement of his affairs he applied to his parents for help. His mother offered to compound with his creditors, but this he honourably refused. He obtained relief by arrangements suggested by a friendly solicitor, by which, at some sacrifice of his estates, he obtained money to pay his debts and continue his expensive style of living. He hired a house on Hounslow Heath, kept lodgings in London, and having plenty of cash at command, thought nothing of expense. He kept a phaeton and hunters. His coachman turned out to be a notorious highwayman known as "Sixteen-string Jack," who, there was reason to believe, used his hunters for the purpose of committing highway robberies. This man on one occasion, when his master happened to want cash to buy a horse, offered him a fifty pound note. A paper written about this period by one of his Cambridge contemporaries, gives some distinct notions of his character at school and college; it is preserved by Mr Hamilton in his *Autobiography*, and may therefore be regarded as authentic. It mentions "his incessant intrepidity, his restless curiosity, his undertaking spirit." His mechanical talent is also dwelt on as something remarkable. His love of adventure and frolic were equally striking, and he was "to be found in every daring oddity. Lords Burlington and Kent in all their rage for pediments were nothing to him. For often has the morning found him scaling the high pediments of the school-door, and at the peril of his life clambering down, opening the door within, before the boy who kept the door could come with the key. His evenings set upon no less perils; in pranks with gunpowder, in leaping from unusual heights into the Thames," etc. At Cambridge he is similarly described as "shaking all Cambridge from its propriety by a night's frolic, in which he climbed the sign-posts, and changed all the principal signs," and being in consequence rusticated by the university authorities. Many curious anecdotes are told of his vivacity, frolic, and love of practical jests. His early character was marked by warmth both of affection and temper, and full of enthusiasm. With such a disposition he was likely to have his opinions determined by his companions, and they were nearly all persons who held the extremely liberal views which actuated his course in life. One disposition, however, forms the key of his early conduct; that was the irrepressible love of distinction. It was his prominent impulse to be first; and the success which in early years



was the result of courage and physical powers, helped to buoy up an element of character which may according to its direction exalt or debase. The narrative of Mr Rowan's life is one of romantic and striking incidents; they give the idea of a man of great moral and physical energy and capable of the noblest sacrifices to his notions of right. Among other excursions he paid a visit to France, and resided there for some time. He became acquainted with the unfortunate George Robert Fitzgerald, who attempted to jockey him out of a horse. Having, by his firm and manly bearing, defeated that design, he was soon after drawn to take some part in a quarrel between the same gentleman and a Mr Baggs; one consequence was his being tricked out of £100, and then induced to act as a second in the duel that ensued between the parties. It was on the whole a most singular affair. Mr Fitzgerald was accused of being *plastroné*, and defended himself by throwing off his coat and waistcoat, when it was observed, that though not defended in the cowardly way suspected, he had taken the curious precaution of tying ribands round his waist and arms. When the parties fired, Mr Baggs was wounded, and while levelling their second pistols, he sunk, saying, "Sir, I am wounded." "But you are not dead yet," said Fitzgerald, firing at him. Baggs immediately started on his legs and advanced on Fitzgerald, who, throwing his pistol at him, quitted his station and kept a zig-zag course along the field, Baggs following him. Baggs took a flying shot, and brought down his man; and Fitzgerald, who was now wounded in the thigh, proposed that as they were both wounded they should begin again. Baggs had, however, taken to his carriage. About the same time, or soon after, Mr Rowan obtained from his friend Lord C. Montague, a Lieutenant-colonelcy in the Portuguese army; this led to further wanderings and adventures, but no military service. He visited Portugal, and spent a short time at Gibraltar. In 1781 he was married to Miss Dawson of Lisanisk, near Carrickmacross. This young lady was at school in England, and usually spent her vacations with Mr Rowan's mother. She was at the time of her marriage in her seventeenth year. The marriage took place in Paris, and there their first child was born, Gawn Hamilton, afterwards a distinguished captain in the navy. During their stay in the French capital, which lasted about two years, they received marked attention from all persons of distinction in their own circle of life.

In 1784 Mr Rowan returned to Ireland to reside, and purchased Rathcassidy in the county of Kildare. Soon after, whilst he was in Dublin with his family, the transaction occurred which first brought him prominently into popular notice. The sum of the affair was, that a girl of the name of Mary Neal had been grossly illtreated. The proceedings taken by her father were crossed by other accusations and proceedings. Mary Neal and her family were accused of robbery. Her mother died in prison, and Mary was convicted and sentenced to death. A strong feeling of suspicion was excited, and Mr Rowan entered into an investigation of the circumstances with all the enthusiasm of a warm and generous nature. He wrote a pamphlet on the occasion, and causing a person who had a principal share in the accusation, to be arrested, he convicted him of subornation of perjury. Mary

Neal was thus saved, but an active paper-war ensued, and Mr Rowan, while his own enthusiasm was strongly excited in defence of an injured woman, became the object of popular admiration and favour. This is the occasion of a story well told by Sir Jonah Barrington, of Hamilton Rowan, who was a man of great strength and stature, making his appearance armed with a bludgeon in a club composed of lawyers, alarming the company by his formidable appearance, and the more formidable demand if any of them would avow himself as the calumniator of Mary Neal. This incident of modern knight errantry was soon followed by another still more adapted to push Mr Rowan forward as a popular champion, and to enlist his honour and vanity in occupying that dangerous post. The sheriff having attempted to suppress a bull-baiting, resistance was made by the people; they threw stones at the soldiers, who fired in return and killed four persons. Mr Rowan was applied to, and after some signs of reluctance, came forward; after subscribing largely to a fund for the prosecution of a public inquiry, he came to town and spent five hours in "tracing every step of the military that day." Sheriff Vance was tried and acquitted, but Mr Rowan's character was set in a strong light as a defender of the people's rights, and his enthusiasm received a new impulse. Impulses of a stronger kind soon followed, adapted to act powerfully on the calmest mind. It is unnecessary to repeat the history of the Irish volunteers. In this celebrated body Mr Rowan was enrolled. He joined his father's company at Killyleagh, and was distinguished by his proficiency in drill and the military intelligence he exhibited. At the election of delegates he was chosen for the county of Down. Mr Rowan was now fairly launched in the career of a patriot. He was everywhere received with the distinction which his character and station deserved; and all this fermented his natural disposition, which was alive to all kindly emotion and very accessible to flattery. At this time faction had not yet absorbed the public feelings; and Mr Rowan was acting in combination with Grattan, Fox, and a host of first-rate men. It has been explained before how two great impulses began at the same period to be developed in the volunteers—that of revolution and that of political reform. The former grew up under cover of the latter. Mr Rowan, with other men of high character, were gradually warped with the direction given to their party; they were taught to despair of reform, and at last to look for a remedy only in the direction of revolution. Mr Rowan became, as he could not well fail to be, implicated in suspicion. In December 1782, a paper of the most seditious kind, full of the sentiments of the French democracy, was actively circulated among the volunteers; Mr Rowan and Napper-Tandy were accused of being the agents of this, and an *ex-officio* information was filed against the former by the Attorney General. At the same time Tandy resented some disrespectful words applied to him by Mr Toler in the House of Commons; and having resolved to obtain satisfaction in the way then usual, he applied to Mr Rowan to act as his friend. As will be explained elsewhere, the meeting did not take place. Other incidents of the same kind quickly followed; a duel between Mr Burrowes and Mr Dowling was fought at Holyhead; Mr Rowan was Mr Dowling's second. Another quarrel of the same nature immediately after occurred between the Hon. Simon Butler



and Lord Fitzgibbon. Mr Rowan was applied to by the former, and called upon the Chancellor, but Lord Fitzgibbon, whose courage had on several occasions been put beyond question, refused to compromise the dignity of his station by accepting the challenge. The language objected to had been used in delivering a sentence of the House of Lords. Mr Rowan expressed a hope that he might be permitted to say to his principal, that it was not his lordship's intention that his words should be taken personally, and that they were spoken unreflectingly. The answer of Lord Fitzgibbon was characteristic; he "thought that the circumstances of the case called for the expressions he had used; that he never spoke unreflectingly in that situation; and, under similar circumstances he would again use similar words." He declined further explanation, referred Mr Rowan to his situation as chancellor, and so the matter ended. Mr Rowan in this affair conducted himself with a spirit and temper which seem to have made a favourable impression on the mind of the Chancellor. A friend of his who chanced to breakfast with Lord Fitzgibbon soon after, had expressed Hamilton Rowan's regret at having come to Ireland while party feeling ran so high, and said that he would return to England when the prosecution then pending should be over. The Lord Chancellor offered in the event of his doing so, to stop the prosecution. Unfortunately, he added the condition that he should withdraw his name from the United Irishmen; this Mr Rowan declined doing, and the offer came to nothing. In 1793 an incident occurred which was a source of great trouble. During a trial in Scotland, a letter of Rowan's was read in court in evidence against a Mr Muir, to whom it was addressed. It drew from the Lord Advocate some very severe language directed against the writer. Mr Rowan resolved to look for satisfaction, and went over to Edinburgh with his friend the Hon. Simon Butler. The public was then little less agitated in Scotland than in Ireland by passions, animosities and fears; and the chivalric levelling of the Irish code of honour was not at all understood. The Lord Advocate of Scotland was less accessible to hostile messages than the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and Mr Rowan's peculiar and privileged character was unknown to the Scotch law officers. A warrant was issued for his arrest; but he was set at liberty on the security of a Mr M'Leod, a gentleman of position and large property, who held similar political opinions. The affair was terminated by the Lord Advocate's declaration, that he did not hold himself accountable for observations which he thought proper to make in his official capacity. As it was evident that he could not be compelled to take a different course, Mr Rowan and his friend saw the wisdom of letting the matter rest so. In the meantime the period of the expected trial drew on, upon the information filed in the preceding year. It was the wish of Mr Rowan to be defended by United Irishmen. But Messrs Emmet and Butler thought it might appear presuming for junior counsel to take the lead in such a case. He yielded to the urgency of Mrs Rowan and other friends, and engaged Curran as his advocate. In the meantime his mother died, and he went to England to settle her affairs. Great delays occurred in the prosecution of the trial; at last, however, it came on; it had been awaited with breathless interest by Mr Rowan's

friends and the lower classes of the people. Curran's celebrated speech did not avail his client; a verdict of guilty was brought in, and he was sent to the new prison to await his sentence. Mr Rowan addressed the court on this occasion; and though he vindicated his own intentions with perfect truth, he still avowed enough to justify the verdict. It has been denied that he was the real distributor of the seditious paper; Mr Rowan did not himself deny it, he justified the sentiments it expressed, and that in language which strongly implied his being a party to its distribution. He was sentenced to a fine of £500, and two years' imprisonment; and to give securities, under heavy bail, for seven years.

During Mr Rowan's imprisonment his manner of living was characteristic of the man. He kept a frugal table for himself, yet such as to enable him to dispense freely to the wants of his poorer fellow prisoners. When he had been in prison about two months, he received a visit from the French emissary Jackson, accompanied by Cockayne, the fatal satellite of his mission. He also about the same time received from Mr Tone his well-known "statement of the situation of Ireland," written for the information of the French Directory. Of this paper Mr Rowan made two copies, of which he gave one to Mr Jackson to convey to France. This, Cockayne put into a cover directed to Hamburgh, and dropped it into the post-office. The whole matter had been preconcerted with Mr Pitt. Cockayne was immediately seized and taken before the privy council, and Mr Jackson was arrested and sent to Newgate. The same evening Cockayne came to Mr Rowan and gave him an account of all that had passed; but it is hard to say how far his statement may have been true or false. It is not likely that this man who had betrayed his friend, and accompanied him to Ireland in the character of a spy, would have incurred the risk of conveying a warning to Mr Rowan, unless he had been prompted to do so by some one in authority. His information so far alarmed Mr Rowan that he considered his life in danger, and determined to escape. The mode in which he effected it, would, we believe, have been impossible, if a secret influence had not been at work to favour the attempt. There can be little doubt that Lord Clare was cautiously instrumental. The under jailer was induced to accompany Mr Rowan to his house in Dominick Street; he contrived to retire for a moment into a back room, where he disguised himself in the clothes of his herd, who had fortunately come to town that day; he then let himself down by a rope from the window, and proceeded to the head of Sackville Street, where, after some delay, he was met by his friend Mr Dowling, according to appointment, with horses. They then proceeded to the sea-side, to a Mr Sweetman's, near Baldoyle, where they were kindly received. The next morning Mr Sweetman set out for Rush, to endeavour to engage a passage for Mr Rowan in one of the smuggling boats, and found the place in great confusion, as a military party was already there making an active search for Mr Rowan in all the neighbouring houses, under the guidance of Dowel, the under-jailer. In the course of the day, proclamations appeared offering £1000 from Government, £500 from the city, and other sums from the jailers, for his apprehension. Thus disappointed in this quarter, it was proposed



to Mr Rowan, to make his escape in a small fishing wherry belonging to Mr Sweetman. To this proposal he consented, and two brothers named Sheridan, who agreed to find a third, were induced to navigate the little craft. They embarked, and after many slight casualties, among which were a storm and the convoy of a fleet of merchant-men, they reached the coast of France in safety. Mr Rowan divided his purse among the sailors, and bade them make for home; but, as he afterwards learned, they were pursued and taken. Mr Rowan was treated with great harshness and suspicion by the first official persons he came in contact with; for a considerable time he was imprisoned in Brest, and exposed to unexpected insults and privations. At last, however, by a fortunate chance, his name was recognised by the inspector of jails, who by an application to the '*Comité de salut publique*,' had him liberated, and sent on to Paris. There he had an interview with Robespierre; immediately after he was taken with a severe fever. On his recovery he saw some scenes well calculated to pervert the principles of a theoretical republican. He was disgusted and awe-struck by the horrible massacres. He witnessed the execution of two hundred persons, and at the distance of some hundred paces, found himself standing in a lake of human blood. He resolved to go to America; obtained passports for the purpose, and sailed in a wherry down the Seine. His journey was impeded and rendered extremely dangerous by the bloodthirsty officiousness of the republican inhabitants of the towns he had to pass, and it was with some difficulty, and after many interruptions and dangers, that he reached Rouen. At last he engaged a passage to America. His voyage was not without danger; but fortunately, seeing the likelihood of being detected by a British cruiser, it had been agreed between himself and the captain, that he should pass for an American merchant named Thompson, on return home, and his name so appeared in the bills of lading. When they had been two days at sea, his vessel was brought to by the *Melampus*, commanded by Sir J. Borlase Warren, who had been acquainted with Mr Rowan at Cambridge. An officer was sent on board, who examined the ship's papers, and then interrogated Mr Rowan pretty closely. He retired as soon as he was allowed, to avoid the risk of being observed by the British commander. The voyage was tedious and crossed by contrary winds, and Mr Rowan relieved its monotony by writing a journal for his wife. Among the entries there appears one which showed how the experience of revolution had affected Mr Rowan's opinions. "I own to you candidly, when it is of no avail, that my ideas of reform, and of another word which begins with the same letter, are very much altered by living for twelve months in France; and I never wish to see one or the other procured by force. I have seen one faction rising over another and overturning it; each in their turn making a stalking horse of the superior power of the people, to cover public and private massacre and plunder, while every man of virtue and humanity shuddered, and skulked away in a disgraceful silence." At last America was reached, and Mr Rowan remained for some time at a boarding-house in Philadelphia, from which he soon proceeded to Wilmington, about thirty miles from that city, and in the State of Delaware. During the few years of his residence in America there

occurred little of importance. He was supplied with money by frequent remittances from his wife, whose superior good sense and steady affection appear conspicuously through his entire narrative. He made two efforts to embark in trade, but displayed more of the ardour and strenuous temper of his mind than of the qualities calculated to succeed in business. His indifference to privations; his proud humility; his readiness to submit to hard labours and trying losses;—all indicate the bold and strong outline of the heroic temper of old romance. He suffered much from the separation from his wife, but would not urge her coming out to join him from a recollection of his own sufferings in the voyage. During all this time occasional efforts were being made to obtain permission for him to return home. Lord Clare exerted a kindly influence in his favour, and expressed his willingness to assist in procuring his pardon; he also, by the exertion of his authority, prevented Mr Rowan's property from passing out of the hands of the family on his outlawry. He now exerted himself to obtain his pardon. In this he met obstacles from the opposition of the English Chancellor, but was countenanced by Lord Castlereagh. A friend of Mr Rowan, of opposite politics, sent him a draft petition which he advised him to forward to Government; but this he declined, as it contained admissions and engagements which he could not make consistently with his own opinions. Mrs Rowan urged her suit that he might at least be allowed to return to the continent of Europe. The same friend, Mr Griffith, warmly seconded her efforts by writing to the Lord Chancellor, and calling on him repeatedly to urge her suit. To Lord Clare's honour be it recorded that he always showed the kindest sympathy for the sufferings and deprivations of Mrs Rowan and her family. He who could trample on the common people as the mud of the streets was able to feel for the sufferings of a gentleman and his family. He gave Mrs Rowan the most judicious advice as to the management of her affairs, and suggested such a course for Mrs Rowan to pursue, as ultimately led to the fulfilment of her wishes. At length, in September 1799, she had the joy of receiving a letter from Lord Castlereagh informing her that in consequence of the Lord Chancellor's good report of her husband's conduct in America, he was permitted to return to Denmark or to any place in Europe where he might be granted a refuge without the apprehension of capture by his majesty's cruisers. In consequence of the arrangements made on receiving this permission, Mr Rowan had, in 1800, the happiness of meeting his family in Altona, where he took a house. In July 1802, he transmitted a petition to the king, expressing gratitude for the protection afforded during his exile to his wife and family; stating that he had withdrawn from France to avoid the imputation of attempting to disturb the tranquillity of his own country; that during five years' retirement in America he had refused all inducements to a contrary conduct. The petition concluded with the expression of complete loyalty, and a prayer for the royal clemency. In the meantime, Lord Clare, to whose influence Mr Rowan's friends mainly trusted, died before the matter could be pressed with much confidence, and Mr Griffith having gone over to London, met with some discouragement from Mr Pelham. Further correspondence followed, in which Mr Rowan himself took a part. At last the question was discussed in the cabinet with a favour-



able result; and his pardon was resolved on. Arrangements were made, meanwhile, to permit his coming to England; they were communicated by Mr Steele and Lord Castlereagh, from each of whom he received letters marking a friendly attention to his interests. The king's warrant for his pardon and the regrant of his property contained a provision to prevent his going to Ireland. As it was the opinion of lawyers that this pardon was informal, that it should be passed under the great seal of Ireland, that his application should have been made in the first instance to the Lord-lieutenant, and that the pardon only secured his liberty in England, it was considered necessary he should go over and plead his pardon and have his outlawry reversed in the Irish Courts. He failed during the Addington administration in obtaining this permission, but on a change of ministry he applied to Lord Castlereagh who showed every disposition to accede to his wishes. The delays were productive of advantage, for in the interval he found interest to have the form of the pardon changed, and was permitted to reside in Ireland. To Ireland accordingly he returned after a number of eventful years which had passed over his native country, and went through the proceedings necessary for the reversal of his outlawry. According to the usual forms, he was put to plead on the indictment of high treason, and pleaded the king's pardon; this being allowed he was discharged. These forms were concluded in a manner highly honourable to Mr Rowan, who in a brief and eloquent manner expressed his sense of the clemency which had been extended to him and his family. The remainder of his life does not belong to history; it was passed in the discharge of his duties as a kind and beneficent landlord and in the peace of family life. He lived to the extremest age ordinarily assigned to man; and though his course was prosperous in the main, he had the affliction to survive his estimable wife, and his good and brave son, Captain Gawn William Rowan Hamilton, who rose to the high rank he held in the British navy by courage and conduct. This gentleman distinguished himself in several actions and commands. In 1832 he resigned the command of the Druid in consequence of ill health. He only lived from this date two years. In August 1834 he died at his father's residence of water on the chest, leaving a son of sixteen to represent the family. Hamilton Rowan died in the same year.

SIR LAURENCE PARSONS, EARL OF ROSSE.

BORN A.D. 1758.—DIED A.D. 1841.

THE founder of the Parsons family in Ireland was Lord Justice in the time of Queen Elizabeth. He bequeathed to his posterity large estates, and his grandson was raised to the peerage as Baron Oxmantown and Viscount Rosse. The next Lord Rosse was raised to an earldom, but dying without issue, the estates passed to the descendants of the Lord Justice's younger brother, baronets of Birr Castle. Sir Laurence Parsons succeeded to the double estates, and finally to the earldoms which had been revived in favour of his uncle. During his uncle's lifetime he took an active part in politics on the popular side; and

the weight of his high connexion, and the great property of the family, made him one of the most important political counters on the side which he espoused. In addition to the accidents of birth and position, he possessed the superior accident of a clear and independent intellect, and as an amateur among the great orators of his day, was a capital public speaker, with the moderation and common sense of a country gentleman, as distinguished from the viewiness which the pure politician is seldom entirely without. He took a firm grasp of his subject, and his style in speaking to it was easy, unencumbered and forcible. He was first member for the University of Dublin, and afterwards for the King's County, of which he retained the representation until the death of his uncle in 1807. In 1792, he opposed the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, in an able speech, which showed considerable power of foreseeing consequences that have actually happened, and which we have learned to regard as just and satisfactory. It was when the question of legislative union was brought forward that he took the most prominent part on the popular side. In both the great struggles upon the subject in 1799, when the measure was rejected, and in 1800, when it was successfully introduced, Sir Laurence acted as leader of the opposition. In the latter year he anticipated the intentions of the Government, and introduced the subject in an amendment on the address. He thus brought on the great debate in which Grattan made his celebrated speech. Sir Laurence Parsons accused the minister of using corrupt means, and of "packing" parliament; he dwelt on the impropriety of bringing on the measure at such a moment; "Annihilate the parliament of Ireland! that is the cry that came across the water. Now is the time: Ireland is weak—Ireland is divided—Ireland is appalled by civil war—Ireland is covered with troops—martial law brandishes its sword throughout the land—now is the time to put down Ireland for ever—now strike the blow! *Who?* Is it you? will you obey that voice? will you betray your country?" He retorted upon the ministry the argument they had used against Reform in time of war, that this was violating their own maxim, and at a moment when Ireland resembled a stricken battlefield, reforming Parliament with a vengeance. He dwelt on the obvious consequence that the hundred Irish members would be swallowed up in the six hundred English, so that virtually he might have argued there would be no more representation for Ireland in a united parliament than for the minority of any one constituency; while there would not be for her the consolation that single constituencies enjoy, of their principles being in a majority, and so represented, elsewhere. Sir Laurence also in this appeal for the parliament which was passing away, recorded the good deeds it had done; and regretted the disposition of Irishmen to look up to England, and down upon their own country, as encouraging the assaults of the British minister. He urged the increase of absenteeism which would result from a union, and concluded a speech which forms a great historical manifesto, with his amendment upon the address.

In 1787, Sir Laurence married Miss Lloyd of Gloster, in the King's County. The remainder of his life was spent in discharging the duties of a resident Irish landlord; and in this position he won a name for doing justice and judgment, far better than political eminence. He



wrote a volume in the early part of his life, in relation to Flood's bequest, on the antiquities of Ireland; and in his latter years, published a work of considerable ability on the evidences of revealed religion. The Earl died in 1841.

JAMES NAPPER-TANDY.

BORN A.D. 1740.—DIED A.D. 1803.

THE hero of the descent upon Raghlin Island,—as Tone was the Irish genius of the grander expedition which terminated in Bantry Bay—was James Napper-Tandy. He was the son of a respectable merchant, and was born in one of the suburbs of Dublin. He took a prominent part in the Volunteer movement, and must have possessed some military knowledge to hold an important command in the Dublin artillery. In 1780, when the volunteers were drawn up in the streets to support the constitutional battle that was being waged for the country in the House of Commons, the guns under Napper-Tandy's command carried about their muzzles such threatening mottoes as "Free Trade, or ——." He disposed the artillery so as to command the quays and bridges in case any military movement should be made from the Phoenix Park side of the river; for it was apprehended that the Government might design dealing with parliament after the Cromwellian fashion. Napper-Tandy was one of those, who, when much had been gained, and Ireland had really been made independent, would have pursued the advantage further, and who having lost for the time the great legislator who had led them forth from bondage, took to themselves a golden calf in the person of the extravagant Earl-bishop of Bristol. In consequence of a difference with the Duke of Leinster regarding the declaration of right, he was expelled from the volunteers, but was restored to his command not long after. When the Society of United Irishmen was formed, he took the most prominent part in it either as Secretary of the Society or President of the "Back Lane parliament." In the memory of the Irish peasantry, and in their ballad poetry, he is a more important figure than other leaders of the rebellion, to whom we are obliged to give more space in these pages. In 1791 and the following year, he took a particularly leading part, and was committed to prison for sending a challenge to Toler, the Solicitor General. He was accused of cowardice in not availing himself of Toler's willingness to meet him; but was acquitted by a court-martial, which at his own desire sat upon the charge. Napper-Tandy also distinguished himself by taking an action against the viceroy, Lord Westmoreland, for illegal imprisonment. In 1791 he published in the name of his party a plan of Reform, savouring so strongly of the principles of the French revolution, that he became an object of suspicion to the Government, and was ultimately driven into exile. In France he became the soul of the external conspiracy for freeing Ireland by subjecting it to the French republic. It was owing to his unceasing exertions that Humbert's expedition was at last despatched; this was only intended by the General as a forlorn hope to induce the Directory to follow it up with the main

force under General Kilmaine; the only Irishmen who accompanied it were Matthew Tone (brother of Theobald Wolfe Tone), Teeling, and Sullivan. Napper-Tandy remained behind, and so escaped the fate which befell his unfortunate comrades. The expeditionary force, which consisted of only one thousand men, and a small proportion of artillery, landed in Killala Bay, and immediately stormed the town. The Bishop of Killala was holding a visitation of his clergy, and was surprised by the attendance of a French General and his staff, whom, however, he found not disagreeable visitors and hospitably entertained at the castle. The people of Connaught were not found prepared for insurrection, and the disorderly mob collected to the French standard, instead of strengthening, was found to be a useless embarrassment. Humbert left two hundred men in Killala and advanced to Ballina, from which the garrison withdrew at his approach, and here he was again obliged to weaken his number by leaving a detachment to hold the town. An army of six thousand men was by this time assembled at Castlebar, under the command of General, afterwards Lord Hutchison, consisting principally of militia regiments and some royal artillery. The French lost no time in advancing to attack it; and an unfortunate circumstance, that tended to demoralise the English troops, was that, on the eve of the battle, General Lake arrived and superseded Hutchison, who was well acquainted with the country, and had the full confidence of his forces. There was a serious disagreement between the commanders at this critical moment; and the French appearing from an unexpected quarter, a disgraceful route of the militia army ensued, in which they lost all their artillery, and three hundred and fifty men and eighteen officers in killed, wounded, and missing, and six stands of colours. The retreat was precipitate and continued to Athlone, a distance of seventy miles, where some of the fugitives arrived in twenty-seven hours. This rout was long remembered in Connaught as the "races of Castlebar." The French gave a ball and supper in the county town of Mayo, on the night of their easy victory, and immediately proceeded to establish districts, with an elected magistrate for each, and a provincial republican Government, of which Mr Moore of Moorehall was appointed the president. Some of the defeated militia of Louth and Kilkenny had deserted to the enemy; but the total force under Humbert never exceeded 2000 men, and the French commander was surprised and disgusted at no general rising taking place. The Marquis of Cornwallis, meanwhile, was collecting a large army, and soon advanced towards Castlebar, which the French evacuated on his approach, marching in the direction of Sligo; they were, however, turned by a sharp engagement at Coloony, with a small force under Colonel Vereker, which, although compelled to retreat, offered them an unexpectedly brave resistance. They next headed towards Granard in the county of Longford, where a partial insurrection had broken out, but the English troops began to hang closely upon their heels; and another sharp engagement took place between Drumshambo and Ballynomore, in which, though Crawford's troops were repulsed, an unpleasant determination was shown by the pursuers. After crossing the Shannon, the pursuit being so close that they were



unable to break down the bridge behind them, the French were surrounded by the overwhelming forces of Cornwallis at Ballinamuck, and after a short engagement compelled to surrender. Their Irish allies received no quarter, and were either killed in the pursuit or executed on the field of battle. Matthew Tone and Teeling were taken prisoners and executed in Dublin.

The news of the first success of the expedition having reached Napper-Tandy, he set out from Bompert with a number of other exiles, in a fast sailing vessel, and landed on the 16th of September 1798, six days before the battle of Ballinamuck, upon the Isle of Raghlin, on the coast of Donegal. All that this body of invaders did was to publish some proclamations; and the news of Humbert's disaster reaching them, they succeeded in escaping to Norway. The expedition which Tone accompanied set sail on the 20th, and resulted as described in his memoir, in the destruction of the French fleet with the exception of two small frigates which escaped with two of the United Irishmen named Corbet\* and Macguire.

Napper-Tandy reached Hamburg in safety, but was given up by the authorities of the town to a British squadron, and brought a prisoner to Dublin. He was tried before Lord Kilwarden and acquitted, but being brought to trial again at Lifford for the descent on Raghlin island he was found guilty and condemned to death. The fact that his son had served under Cornwallis in India probably saved him from immediate execution; but he was excluded from the bill of Amnesty. Time, however, was given for the French Government to interfere on his behalf; and the first consul having threatened to break off the peace negotiations then proceeding if his life was not spared, he escaped the ignominious fate which overtook so many of his comrades. By a second intervention of the French Government, after two years' imprisonment, he was released from prison and conducted to Wicklow, and sent thence to Bordeaux, where he died one year after. He held the rank of Colonel in the French army.

#### LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD.

BORN A.D. 1763.—DIED A.D. 1798.

LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD was the fifth son of James the twentieth Earl of Kildare, afterwards first Duke of Leinster. His mother was daughter of the second Duke of Richmond. After his father's death the Duchess married Mr Ogilvie, a gentleman of ancient and respectable Scottish descent. Lord Edward was treated with great kindness by his stepfather, who brought him up for the army. As he grew to manhood, his sweet and refined character, full of enthusiasm, made him extremely beloved by his family and all who enjoyed his intercourse.

\* William Corbet was born in 1779. His father was a distinguished classical teacher, and the son entered Trinity College, Dublin, at the age of fifteen, and gave great promise. He was secretary of the College Historical Society; in Lord Clare's visitation he was one of those expelled. He rose to the rank of General in the French army.

In his eighteenth year he obtained a lieutenancy in the 96th regiment, and from this exchanged into the 19th, with which he sailed for America. We cannot of course follow him through this campaign, in which we find him fighting against the cause for which in his own country he sacrificed his life. The impression he produced upon his comrades may be given in the words of Sir John Doyle :—"I never knew so loveable a person ; and every man in the army, from the general to the drummer, would cheer the expression." In 1783 he returned home ; his brother sent him into the Irish parliament, but he does not seem to have taken an active part in the business of the house, in the proceedings of which his name hardly occurs. The taste for military life and love of adventure was too strong to allow him to settle down to political drudgery ; and, after spending a short time in military studies, he paid a short visit to Spain, and then rejoined his regiment in Nova Scotia. The origin of his republican notions is said to have been that which has often since made radicals of the younger sons of noble houses ; but in his case the lack of fortune was brought painfully home to him by the family of a young lady, with whom he had fallen in love, rejecting him on this account. Lord Edward now found himself, upon such a ground, disappointed in love, sick of artificial society, under the fascination of nature in new, wild, and adventurous scenes, among the boundless forests and prairies of the new world. The influence of this life permanently affected his character and confirmed the republican turn to which his disappointment had given rise. In one of his letters he describes the delightful feeling of wakening "perhaps in the middle of the night, in a fine open forest, all your companions snoring about you, the moon shining through the trees, the burning of the fire,—in short, everything strikes you." Among the charms of his most delightful letters, one cannot fail to remark as particularly beautiful, the way in which he regards his mother. On his return to Europe Lord Edward was introduced to Pitt ; but their acquaintance does not seem to have gone further. In the society of Fox and Sheridan, Moore represents him as drinking in new and deep draughts of the philosophy of republicanism. In these companions he found his own vague feelings take substance and glow into life,—he began to understand what had been unconsciously working in his mind, and saw it recommended by all the splendid sanctions with which genius, wit, eloquence, and the most refined good fellowship, could invest it. From London he went to Paris in 1792 ; and here his republicanism received a fresh development. The revolution had fully set in, and had already given indications of what it would grow to. The unhappy Louis was only not yet murdered—the south was filled with massacre—the goddess of Reason was set up—the Jacobins were reaching their dreadful ascendancy ; all was menace and murder, but they were wreathed with flowers, marched to music, and revelled in the strains of love and peace. The enthusiastic stranger failed to be impressed with the tiger features, or the sparkle of the assassin's knife beneath the tragi-comic robe, or the blood that dropped from its folds ; he heard but the philosophy of the forest, the echo of the freedom of the woods. The splendid and imposing exhibitions which afterwards "drew iron tears" from the buccaniering sympathy of Tone, gave also a strong military impulse to a higher heart. Another and purer influence was brought to bear to strengthen his im-



pressions. He fell in love with a young lady whose birth is involved in some mystery, but who was understood to be, and it has since been pronounced truly, the daughter of the Duke of Orleans and Madame de Genlis. With this lady he was more fortunate than in his first love affair; he was accepted and married her. It may be presumed that the daughter of Egalité was not unversed in the philosophy of the revolutionary salons, and threw a glamour over principles which were themselves picturesque and fascinating in outline.

We find Lord Edward writing at this time,—“in the coffee-houses and playhouses, every man calls the other comrade, *frère*,—and with a stranger he immediately begins—“*Oh, nous sommes tous frères, tous hommes,—nos victoires sont pour vous, pour tout le monde.*” Such language won upon Lord Edward’s imagination and heart, and allured him by his very goodness and benevolence from the path of honour and safety. On a fatal day, at a public dinner given by the English in Paris in honour of the French victories, he proclaimed himself a convert to the doctrine quoted above, flung off his allegiance, his civil and military rank, and adopted the title of “Le Citoyen Edward Fitzgerald.” His dismissal from the king’s service followed as a matter of course. It was considered better for the sake of his family that there should be no formal inquiry into the circumstances; but the hope was entertained that his dream would have a waking, and that he might quietly fall back into the path of sobriety. Lord Edward did not complain; he was too noble to be vindictive. He was decided in the course he had chosen by every sentiment that binds strong spirits; the habits of his mind—all he had learned of political opinion; the connection he had formed;—in brief, the air he breathed was the wildest republicanism, the very negation and defiance of social institution. No strong grasp of reason restrained him from the exaggeration of theories which men, such as Fox and Grattan, had propounded and upheld,—men who knew how far to carry them, and where they would become absurd. Politics are not like mathematics; the truest proposition in them may be pushed *ad absurdum*, without disproving the proposition itself. The brotherhood of man may be taken as an instance, undoubtedly true, yet capable of being pushed into the rankest absurdity.

Lord Edward’s first return to his native land, and into the circle of his friends and connections, brought him into a more wholesome atmosphere than had for some time surrounded him. His family ties, and others he had formed, tended to bring him back to the quiet course of domestic life. He soon became aware of congenial elements working about him; a process of assimilation set in; the conspiracy of the United Irishmen permeated every circle, and could not fail to gain as a convert one so much pre-disposed to receive its poison. In the interval he enjoyed all that happiness in home which he was so peculiarly fitted to appreciate. Strong affection spread sunshine about his path, and his simple tastes and freedom from social bondage, enabled him to enjoy as few are privileged, those true and pure delights which are only to be found in home. The history of this period is illustrated chiefly by letters to his mother, full of the same kind of chivalrous filial devotion which forms such a charm in his American correspondence. He seems to have been intensely

attached also to Lady Pamela, his wife, and to his infant son. In October 1794, he writes to his mother, who was the confidante of all his emotions,—speaking of the infant,—“Dear mother, how you would love it! nothing is so delightful as to see it in its dear mother’s arms, with her sweet, pale, delicate face, and the pretty looks she gives it.” Again, describing his little place in Kildare, he says, “I think I shall pass a delightful winter there. I have got two fine clamps of turf which look both comfortable and pretty. I have paled my little flower-garden before my hall-door with a lathe paling, like the cottage, and stuck it full of roses, sweetbriar, honeysuckles, and Spanish broom. I have got all the beds ready for my flowers, so you may guess how I long to be down to plant them. The little fellow will be a great addition to the party. I think when I am down there with Pam. and the child, of a blustering evening, with a good turf fire, and a pleasant book, coming in after seeing my poultry put up, my garden settled, flower-beds and plants covered for fear of frost, the place looking comfortable and taken care of, I shall be as happy as possible; and sure I am, I shall regret nothing but not being near my dearest mother.” So little does he seem aware at this time of the social earthquake by which his house was to be shaken down, that we cannot believe he had actually joined the conspiracy in 1794, as some writers have asserted. Two years later the United Irishmen had made considerable progress in the work of cementing the prejudices and passions of the people against English Government, and the conspiracy had gained a great increase of impulse from the hopes of a French invasion. It was probably in 1796 that Lord Edward Fitzgerald joined. His rank and French connection made him a suitable emissary from the “Irish executive” to the Directory; when Mr Lewines, a Dublin attorney, had opened communications in the previous year. Some representative of rank duly accredited by the leaders was required by the French Government; accordingly Lord Edward, accompanied by Mr Arthur O’Connor, now repaired to Hamburg, and from Hamburg to Switzerland. At Basle it seems to have been arranged that O’Connor should proceed alone to meet the French authority, as Lord Edward’s connection with the house of Orleans might cause suspicion as to the object of such a meeting. Accordingly O’Connor went on and had an interview with Hoche, in which the general project of an invasion is supposed to have been adjusted. Some of the results have been stated. Hoche’s expedition took place shortly after, and was arranged at this meeting. The circumstances became known to the English Government. The danger arising from the conspiracy was now urgent. For two years there had been all but open rebellion, and yet it had been impossible either by force or money to come at any of the chiefs. The indiscretion or treachery of Thomas Reynolds, a Dublin mercer, at last put it into their power to do so. He was travelling with a Mr Cope on business, and probably from a natural garrulity and the cravings of vanity to display his importance, let fall some hints which roused the curiosity and sharpened the attention of his companion. The latter, by some cautious cross-questioning, or perhaps opposition, which since the days of the Pylian sage has been a good screw for secrets, drew out enough to make Reynolds feel himself committed. According to one account Cope made indirect



proposals of reward, upon which Reynolds revealed the whole, and was persuaded to take the only course consistent with safety after such a communication; and the Government was at last put in possession of the information it required. The memory of Reynolds has of course ever since been held in detestation in Ireland, where the hatred of informers is strongly marked as a characteristic of the people arising from their unfortunate habits of agrarian crime and conspiring against Government. As warfare against the foreign landlord and the foreign Government are both alike regarded out of the category of common crime, justifiable and patriotic, the informer, instead of being held in the light of an ordinary witness against a criminal, is guilty in the eyes of his fellows, of the most atrocious baseness, and even the common witness, who has had no special trust reposed in him, is regarded none the less as a traitor. Proportionate odium attaches to the authority that uses the resource.

Reynolds became a regular agent of the Government, and from time to time gave notice of the proceedings of the conspirators. On the 12th of March, a meeting of delegates was arranged to take place at the house of Mr Oliver Bond, and of this, information was given to the authorities through Mr Cope. On the appointed day, Bond's house was visited by the police magistrates, and fourteen of the conspirators were apprehended. Dr M'Neven and Thomas Emmet were taken among the rest. Lord Edward alone escaped. A separate warrant had been issued for his arrest, of which he had received notice from a faithful servant, as he entered his brother's mansion in Kildare Street. It was unfortunate that he was not taken with the others, as his arrest would have been the means of preserving his life. He now remained the sole head of the approaching insurrection, and whilst the rebels looked to him as of great importance, the officers of justice were engaged in an active search for his place of concealment. He remained for a month in the house of a widowed lady, and from thence, it being necessary for the purposes in which he was engaged, he removed to the house of a Mr Murphy, a featherman in Thomas Street. Still he might have saved himself. Lord Clare, actuated by commiseration for the young nobleman and for his family, intimated a desire that he should make his escape, and engaged that the ports should be open to permit it; but Lord Edward's courage, and his zeal in what he looked upon as a noble enterprise, refused escape save through the path of triumph. But his daring indiscretion made it impossible to remain concealed in any one place, and he removed to the house of a man named Cormack, where he kept open house for the confederates of his enterprise. It was decided that the banner of rebellion should be raised in the province of Leinster, in the end of May. Every day Lord Edward's arrest became more and more important. On the 11th, a reward of £1000 was proclaimed for his apprehension. This gave a new impulse to the conspirators, and the day was fixed—the 23rd of May—for a general rising. On the 17th, information was given that he was to pass guarded from Thomas Street to Usher's Island, and Major Sirr, with a strong party proceeded to the locality, but as there were two ways by which the conspirators might pass, he was obliged to divide his forces so as to intercept them by either road. A similar plan happening to be

adopted by Lord Edward's escort, there took place in each of the two streets a conflict between the parties, and Major Sirr, who had almost alone to bear the brunt in his quarter, was near losing his life. One prisoner was taken, who imposed on them so adroitly by the assumption of ignorance, that he was set free in a few days, but afterwards turned out to have been M'Cabe, one of the most notorious of the rebel party. Lord Edward so far escaped. Next day, however, many slight incidents led him to suspect that he was watched, and he was conducted back to Murphy's house. At mid-day, a party of soldiery searched the place of concealment he had just left. This of course put him on his guard, and he was hidden in a securer place among Murphy's stores. It is impossible to say whether the strange imprudence of Neilson, who afterwards kept away from the meeting just preceding the outbreak, and in real or pretended drunkenness, endeavoured to force his way into Lord Edward's prison, had not something to do with his discovery in this last retreat. Neilson paraded the streets all day in a state of much excitement, and occasionally, as he passed the door, asked Mrs Murphy if their charge was safe. He was at last asked in to dinner; Lord Edward came down to meet him, having laid aside his apprehensions; but after dinner, Neilson suddenly retired for some unknown reason, and on quitting the house, left the door open behind him. Suspicion of course fell upon him as the traitor; but an entry of the payment of the reward offered for Lord Edward's apprehension to F. H., who is supposed to have been Hughes, one of Lord Edward's attendants, tends to exonerate Neilson. By some means the place of concealment was found out, and just as Lord Edward had retired to his room, and had thrown himself on the bed with his coat off, when as Murphy was about to leave him, a trampling was heard on the stairs, and Major Swan entered the room. Scarcely had the officer announced the purpose of his coming, when Lord Edward sprang from the bed, as Murphy described him, "like a tiger;" Swan fired a pistol at him without effect, and then flung it in Murphy's face, bidding a soldier take charge of the latter. Lord Edward wounded him with a dagger, and succeeded in also wounding Ryan, who had come to Swan's assistance, and flinging him to the ground. He was making his way to the door in spite of both, when Major Sirr, who had been placing the soldiers round the house, came to the door, and taking a deliberate aim, fired a pistol at Lord Edward, wounding him in the arm near the shoulder. Notwithstanding this severe wound, the soldiers who were called up had the greatest difficulty in disarming and making him prisoner. At last he was bound and taken in a sedan chair to the Castle, where his papers were examined, and thence to prison, where he suffered the strictest confinement, and was not permitted to see any of his friends or family. His wound, which was not of a nature under ordinary circumstances to have caused his death, was aggravated by the agitation of his mind, and the incidents connected with and preceding his arrest, which had been enough to disorder so sensitive a system. He was under the apprehension of an ignominious death, horrible beyond conception to a man of his temperament. Without, he heard the sounds of workmen erecting a scaffold for another prisoner who was about to be executed; in the



solitude of his cell, and the feverishness of a wounded man, he connected it with his own execution. All this caused the wound to mortify, and strong paroxysms of delirium set in. Lord Camden was firm in his refusal to allow any of the unfortunate nobleman's relatives to visit him; but, it has been mentioned in Lord Clare's memoir, he at last humanely consented to accompany Lady Louisa Conolly, Lord Edward's aunt, to the prison, and remained in the outer room for two hours. She has described the scene—"I first approached his bed; he looked at me, knew me, kissed me, and said (what will never depart from my ears,) 'It is heaven to me to see you;' and shortly after, turning to the other side of his bed, he said, 'I can't see you;' I went round; he soon after kissed my hand, and smiled at me, which I shall never forget, though I saw death in his face at the time. I told him Henry had come. He said nothing that marked surprise at his being in Ireland; but he expressed joy at hearing it, and said, 'Where is he, dear fellow?' Henry then took my place, and the two brothers frequently embraced each other, to the melting of a heart of stone; and yet God enabled Henry and myself to remain quite composed. As every one left the room, we told him that we only were with him. He said, 'that is very pleasant.'" Lady Louisa then mentions a conversation in which she gave him some accounts of his wife and children. It did not proceed far before he showed signs of mental wandering. They left him with a promise to return next day. But within two hours and a half he was dead. One extract more conveys the most satisfactory incident by which the life of mortal man can be attended at its close. "I hear that he frequently 'writes Lady Louisa,' composed his dear mind with prayer—was vastly devout—and as late as yesterday evening, got Mr Garnet, the surgeon, to read in the Bible the death of Christ—the subject picked out by himself—and seemed much composed by it." Lord Edward left a widow and three children. In July, 1798, a bill for his attainder was brought in by the Attorney General, which passed after some opposition. When the rebellion went by, there was a wish to reverse it; and as Lord Edward had not been tried, there was some ground to object to such a bill ever having been passed. Emmet's rebellion in 1803 prevented the reversal from being carried out at the time; and it was not until 1819, on the application of Mr Ogilvie, and by the kind efforts of Lord Liverpool, that the estates were restored.

SAMUEL NEILSON.

BORN A.D. 1759—DIED A.D. 1803.

It is alleged that Mr Neilson was "the originator" of the United Irish Club, as Mr Tone was the contriver and author of its organisation.\* The prominent part which he took in the events related, renders it fit to give some distinct account of him.

He was the son of a Presbyterian clergyman in the north, and spent several of the earlier years of his life in a commercial business. The prevailing passion for politics, and the great events of the time, drew

\* Madden's "United Irishmen."

him, like others, into political movements, which rapidly absorbed all other concerns in Ireland. He became proprietor of a public journal called the *Northern Star* which was the principal organ of that party out of which the United Club had its origin. The preliminary address of this paper proposed parliamentary reform, as the chief object of its attention. But in strict accordance with the statements which we have already made, we have Tone's authority for the assertion, that reform was in part regarded as a pretext; and in part, as a means to an end; and that this end was "to erect Ireland into a republic, independent of England." The first number of this paper appeared on the 4th of January, 1792. We think it enough to state here, that it was set up by a subscription of wealthy merchants of Belfast, that Neilson embarked £500 in the undertaking, and that the paper by his exertions quickly acquired an extensive circulation. After some time, in 1794, he became sole proprietor. As it was the great channel for the publication of matter not altogether within legal bounds, it was occasionally the subject of expensive prosecutions, which soon induced the other proprietors to relinquish their shares, and finally compelled Neilson to abandon his mercantile occupations. After many misfortunes of the same kind, brought on by the illegal and seditious character of his publication, it was finally suppressed in 1797, after having been an instrument of incalculable mischief to the country. Previously, however, to this last-mentioned event, Neilson himself had, with others of his confederates, been arrested, and committed to Newgate, on a charge of high treason. His conduct upon the occasion was manly and disinterested; and, although he acted under delusions too common at the time, he was one of those few of whom we should say, if certain doubts were more satisfactorily cleared up, that his patriotism was not a pretence, or a mere cloak of faction. The circumstances of Mr Neilson's arrest are given at length in the *Northern Star* of that date. It will here be enough to state, that he voluntarily surrendered himself, on the ground that, having committed no offence, he had nothing to fear.

On the 22d February, 1798, Neilson was liberated. If we are to adopt the grounds for this step, proposed by some writers, we would infer that it was in part to prevent disclosures, which, if prematurely made, would have embarrassed the efforts of Government to bring the details of the conspiracy to light. It is also probable that a false sense was attached to the declaration made by Bird, a person, who, having first agreed to give information, was seized with remorse, and escaped, that Neilson was innocent. It did not occur to the writers alluded to that Bird was probably not quite in the secret, and also that his notion of guilt may not have involved rebellion. On his liberation, he removed to the house of a Mr Sweetman, with whom he remained until the arrest of the principal leaders of the conspiracy at Bond's.

After this event, he was again induced to take a very active, and even violent part. His excuse, when afterwards questioned, was, that he had learned that he was to be again arrested—an apology of which we must doubt the candour, as it is not only inadequate, but essentially connected with the violation of the pledge on which he was liberated. However this may have been, he now exerted himself with great activity in filling up the vacancies left by these arrests. His habitual indiscre-



tion quickly led him into the danger he pretended to have apprehended. He was actually proclaimed on the 22d of May, the day after the arrest of Henry and John Sheares. He planned an attack on Newgate, for the next day, for the liberation of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. He was taken while reconnoitring the prison, and his party in consequence dispersed. He is alleged to have received severe personal injuries on that occasion. The fact is not to be doubted, as the sincerity of Neilson is strongly attested, and still more forcibly confirmed by after circumstances.

Neilson was the first proposer of that compromise with the Government, by which himself and many of the other prisoners were spared, and afterwards liberated. It was suggested to him by his attorney.

During the negotiation which was carried on between the prisoners and the Government, a very striking, and indeed singular, display of human perverseness and cunning ensued. The prisoners were making terms for their lives: they bargained to give certain information to the Government, and formed the design to deceive the Government in their communications. They simply viewed the contract as an occasion to impress views favourable to their purposes, and to vindicate themselves. Their examinations (as published by themselves) were plainly a contest of advocacy. Nevertheless, they manifested a bold and defiant front, and showed a petulance of temper, which would be astonishing, if we were not to consider that, when they had secured their lives, there was nothing further to fear; that is, nothing at once apparent. There was, however, in their evidence, nearly as much inadvertence, as craft and dissimulation. They let fall inconsistencies and strong admissions, in the shape of opinions; and, on the whole, displayed a temper and tone of character, which could not fail to awaken strong distrust.

While such was the position in which they stood, circumstances arose in which it appeared unsafe to liberate them unreservedly. The conduct of Tone had made it quite apparent, what consequences were to be expected from sending out some dozen missionaries of Irish conspiracy to guide French expeditions to our shores. To the administration it became evident, that it was inconsistent with public safety. They acted on a principle of public duty (perhaps a mistaken one), when they determined to qualify the terms into which they had entered with the prisoners. They, on their part, displayed the temper which was to be expected, and for which it is easy to excuse them. They were subjected to a grievous disappointment, and, according to their principles, an unmerited penalty. But it had become far too apparent, from their own conduct, and the tone of character they had displayed in the negotiation,—that, under the existing circumstances, they could not, with safety to the kingdom, be trusted. Whether, under such an impression (for this is enough), it was the duty of Government to hold to the terms of an agreement, hollow and specious on the part of the prisoners, and on that of Government merely a formal pretext for mercy—is a question into which we do not think it necessary to enter; nor should we have wasted space in alluding to it, were not the complaints of the prisoners reiterated, until they have passed into tacit admission on all sides. There are occasions when it may become apparent that

persons in office have entered into engagements inconsistent with their duty to the nation : it will then depend on the nature of the contract, and the character of the parties, how far they are bound. It was not for subjects leagued against the Government, and equivocating for their lives with the intention to keep no faith themselves, to complain of any departure from an imperfect engagement, in which there was no reciprocity—a contract which could not stand in equity. We cannot consider that, substantially, any injustice was committed towards men whose whole proceedings had fully and fairly earned for them the last penalty of the law ; and who, in bargaining for their lives, had recourse to every possible chicanery, heaping odium on the Government, while experiencing its mercy. The indignation of official agents was quite justifiable : it was in some instances displayed in acts of petty insolence, discreditable to the actors, but nothing further. The personal indignities of which Neilson has complained, are not to be attributed to any cruelty on the part of persons under Government : the prisoners were generally treated with great indulgence—this we have on the express admission of many of them. Neilson appeared to have been in some respects a special exception : this will be in part explained by his own conduct, which was at times such as to alarm his associates. He was violent, indiscreet ; and, if he cannot be described as a drunkard, he was, when drunk, more than usually dangerous.

We freely admit of the defence which has been made for Neilson, on some apparently equivocal points. We think that he was, to the full extent of his own principles, an honest man. His letters from Fort-George exhibit him favourably, so far as respects the private relations of life. His political conduct was sincere according to his views. His sufferings evidently sobered, corrected, and dignified his character ; the prisoner of Fort-George is a different man from the prisoner in Dublin Jail. On the whole, there is somewhat very unaccountable in the circumstances attending his imprisonment in Dublin. He made a complaint of the very heavy irons in which he was placed by the jailer. But it afterwards incidentally appears that those irons were but a pretence. He only wore them, he told Curran, for the inspector ; while the jailer affirmed in court, that he put them on from the fear that he would attempt his life. There is some inconsistency in the whole narration ; and all the circumstances, when put together, seem to justify the dismay and tergiversation of the rebel directory when they heard of it. If Neilson was, what we should not wish to deny without better proof, an honest man, he was so excessively unguarded in his conduct, that no secret could have been safe in his keeping.

To return to the contract : it was the English Government, and not the members of the Irish administration, which, on very full and sufficient grounds, determined to detain the prisoners till the termination of the war with France. They could not decide otherwise. They could not have anticipated that this would be productive of any unreasonable length of captivity. They ordered them to be conveyed to Fort-George, a military fortress in the north of Scotland.

The true spirit of this measure, and the entire absence of any vindictive motive, was shown by the great attention paid to the health and comfort of the prisoners. This is strongly testified by the letters of



Neilson. The same documents also strongly manifest a very considerable improvement in his own character. Separated from the moral contamination of the party with which he had moved—the depraved habits which had lowered both the moral and intellectual tone of his mind; and confined to the society of the better class of that party—men of talent, information, and virtue,—he became sober, reflecting, and disciplined. Separated from his family, his affections were awakened into a predominating intensity, and his religion became a happy and salutary resource.

The prisoners passed their time in reading, and music, and frolic; and, although they exhibited little gratitude, the Government in the license given them, showed great lenity and forbearance.

Neilson, by a courageous act of self-denial, succeeded in obtaining his son as the companion of his captivity. The prisoners in Fort-George were allowed each a pint of wine every day. Neilson sold his share at the rate of 3s. 6d. per bottle, by which means he raised a sufficient sum for the maintenance of his boy, then in his seventh year, and remarkable for his docility and amiable disposition. This child not only occupied much of his father's time usefully and pleasantly, but helped to amuse the dulness and monotony of their confinement for the other prisoners, who also exerted themselves for his instruction. Under these circumstances, Neilson's imprisonment, though disturbed by the natural impatience of constraint, was passed in a quiet and virtuous tenor of studies, duties, innocent amusement, and intelligent society, which had together a salutary influence both on his health and moral character. At last, peace was concluded with France; and the inmates of Fort-George were liberated. Neilson turned his mind to America, but first determined on a clandestine visit to Ireland—both to see his family, and to vindicate himself from some imputations which affected his reputation. He effected this purpose with some risk, but without any material adventure. He then crossed the Atlantic—having left his family in Ireland—with the intention to secure the means of subsistence, before he removed them from their friends. On his arrival in New York, he soon received encouragement to induce him to set up a journal; and entered upon his labours with diligence and success. But a rheumatism, contracted during his long imprisonment, soon returned with added severity, and his constitution quickly gave way. He died at a small town on the Hudson river, in 1803, in the 44th year of his age.

#### DOCTOR MACNEVIN.

BORN A.D. 1763.—DIED A.D. 1841.\*

DOCTOR MACNEVIN was descended from a family of considerable respectability, in the county of Galway. At an early age he was sent to Germany, on the invitation of his uncle, Mr Hugh MacNevin, who had acquired some property in that country by marriage. He there

\* Though Dr MacNevin lived far into a period later than that in which we are yet engaged, his life belongs to the time in which he is here noticed.













APR 28 1983

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE  
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

---

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

---

DA  
916  
W54  
v.5

Wills, James  
The Irish nation, its his-  
tory & its biography

(97)



